



# THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM, CAPITALISM, SOVIETISM AND FASCISM

BY  
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War must be paid for. The nail-armies cannot be fed nor slaughtered by promissory notes. Money is obtained by conscription, and money partly by direct taxation and inflation, but mainly by borrowing from the capitalists in spite of the protests of the Labor Party against the expropriation of capital from conscription. The joint result is that in order to pay the capitalists the interest on their loans, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to tax them so heavily that it is a class they are losing by the transaction. Robbing Peter, who did not lend, to pay Paul, who did. As the property-owners who hold War Loan Stock gain at the expense of those who do not, a unanimous Capitalist protest is impossible. An illustration. But the Labor contention that it would pay the propertied class as a whole to cancel the National Debt is one the less sound. Financing war by funded loans. As capital invested in war is utterly and destructively consumed it does not, like industrial capital, leave the nation better equipped for subsequent production. The War Loan though registered in the books of the Bank of England as existing capital, is nothing but debt. The country is therefore impoverished to meet interest charges on 7000 millions of non-existent capital. There are reasons for not repudiating this debt directly, but it is the war produced an enormous consumption of capital and yet left the world with less money to distribute than before, a veiled repudiation of at least part of the debt is inevitable. Our method of repudiation is to redistribute income between the holders of War Loan and the other capitalists. But as the huge borrowing and confiscation of capital that

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The War, by shewing how a Government can confiscate the incomes of one set of citizens and hand them over to another set with or without the intention of equalizing distribution or nationalizing industries or services, shewed also how any predominant class, trade, or clique which can nobble our Cabinet Ministers can use the power of the State for selfish ends by measures disguised as reforms or political necessities. All retrogressions and blunders, like all genuine reforms, are lucrative to somebody, and so never lack plausible advocates. Illustrative cases of exploitation of the rates and taxes and of private benevolence by Capitalism and Trade Unionism. Public parks, endowed schools, garden cities, and subsidies. The Government subsidy to the coal owners in 1925 not Socialistic nor even Capitalistic, but simply unbusinesslike. Poplarism. Mischief done by subsidies and doles. Subsidies plus Poplarism burn the candle at both ends. The danger of conscious and deliberate exploitation of the coercive and confiscatory powers of the Government by private or sectional interests is greatly increased by the modern American practice of employing first-rate brains as such in industrial enterprise. The

**American Trade Unions are following this example. Surprising results. What its adoption by English Trade Unions will mean. Socialists will still have to insist on equalization of income to prevent Capitalist big business and the aristocracy of Trade Unionism controlling Collectivist Governments for their private ends**

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## CAPITALISM IN PERPETUAL MOTION

Nothing stays put. Literal Conservatism impossible. Human society is like a glacier, apparently stationary, always in motion, always changing. To understand the changes that are happening, and the others that are coming, it is necessary to understand the changes that have gone before. Examples of every phase in economic evolution still survive and can be studied from life. Without such study we are liable to be misguided and corrupted or exasperated. Those adventures of Capitalism in pursuit of profits which took the form of thrilling exploits by extraordinary individuals with no sordid aims are narrated as the splendid history of our race. On the other hand, the more shameful episodes in that pursuit may be imputed to the greed of capitalists instead of to the ferocity and bigotry of their agents. Both views may be discounted as special pleadings. A capitalist may accidentally be a genius just as she may be a fool or a criminal. But a capitalist as such is only a person with spare money and a legal right to withhold it from the hungry. No special ability or quality of any sort beyond ordinary prudence and selfishness is involved in the capitalist's function: the solicitor and stockbroker, the banker and employer, will carry the capital to the proletarians and see that when consuming it they replace it with interest. The most intelligent woman can do no better than invest her money, which does far more good when invested than when spent in charity. But the employers and financiers who exploit her capital are pressed by the exhaustion of home markets and old industries to finance adventurous and experimental geniuses who explore and invent and conquer. They cannot concern themselves with the effect of these enterprises on the world or even on the nation provided they bring back money to the shareholders. Capital, to save itself from rotting, has to be ruthless in its ceaseless search for investment; and mere Conservatism is of no avail against this iron necessity. Its chartered companies. It adds India, Borneo, Rhodesia to the white Englishman's burden of its naval and military defence. It may yet shift our capital from Middlesex to Asia or West Africa. Our helplessness in such an event. No need to pack up yet; but we must get rid of static conceptions of civilization and geography

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## THE RUNAWAY CAR OF CAPITALISM

Controlled motion is a good thing; but the motion of Capital is uncontrollable and dangerous. As the future of civilization depends on Governments gaining control of the forces that are running away with Capitalism an understanding of them is necessary. Very few people do understand them. The Government does not; neither do the voters. The difference between Governments and governed. The Governments know the need for government and want to govern. The governed have no such knowledge: they resent government and desire freedom. This resentment, which is the central weakness of Democracy, was not of great importance when the people had no votes, as under Queen Elizabeth and Cromwell. But when great extensions of government and taxation came to be required to control and supplant Capitalism, bourgeois Democracy produced an increase of electoral resistance to government; and proletarian Democracy has continued the bourgeois tradition. The resultant paralysis of Parliament has produced a demand for dictatorships; and Europe has begun to clamor for political disciplinarians. Between our

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We are not born free. Nature is the supreme tyrant, and in our latitudes a hard taskmaster. Commercial progress has been at root nothing more than inventing ways of doing Nature's tasks with less labor, in short saving labor and winning leisure. Some examples. Actually liberty is leisure. Political liberations cannot add to liberty unless they add to leisure. For example, woman's daily routine. Sleep, feeding, resting, and locomotion are not leisure; they are compulsory. A seven hour working day gives at most six hours' leisure out of the seventeen non working hours. The woman of property. Leisure is the incentive to attain her position. All wage workers value leisure more than money. Property coveted because it confers the maximum of leisure. Nevertheless, as leisure brings freedom, and freedom brings responsibility and self determination, it is dreaded by those accustomed to tutelage, for instance, soldiers and domestic servants. The national fund of leisure. Its present maldistribution. Description of a hypothetical four hours working day. Exception to intermittent labor at regular hours. Pregnancy and nursing. Artistic, scientific, and political work. Fixed daily hours only a basis for calculation. A four hours day may mean in practice six days a month, two months a year, or an earlier retirement. Difference between routine work and creative work. Complete freedom impossible even during leisure. Legislative restraints on religion, sport, and marriage. The Inhibition Complex and the Punch baby. The Contrary or Anarchic Complex. The instinctive resistance to Socialism as slavery obscures its aspect as a guarantee of the maximum possible of leisure and therefore of liberty. 304

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**rapid disappearance Communist Puritanism. Equality of income not yet possible in Russia, as professional life would not be liveable on the level of unskilled labor. Introduction of piecework and gradation of labor at different wage rates indispensable until production reaches a point at which the professional level can be made general. The new Constitution of 1936 might almost have been written by Tom Paine. It is out of date and needs revision in the light of the studies and experiences of the Fabians in England. A word on neo-Trotskyism.** . . . . . **PAGE 425**

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## FASCISM

Fascism not a novelty. Caesar, Cromwell, and the two Napoleons. It is always provoked by the inefficiency and sloth of parliamentary procedure. Revolution stayed off during the nineteenth century by millennial hopes of the results of extension of the franchise. Successive disappointments. Complete adult suffrage attained by the enfranchisement of women in 1918. The enfranchised women promptly refuse to vote for women. Energetic political geniuses find that parliament can do nothing but extinguish them if they devote the best years of their life to getting elected. The people, when no more Reform Acts are possible, lose patience with parliamentary futility. They turn to any leader who knows how to play on their mood. The Napoleons pushed aside the parliaments and became emperors quite easily. Their European successors of today call themselves simply Leaders. They organize the conventional, thoughtless, romantic majority into a striking force which destroys all liberal institutions and wrecks and plunders all the little separate proletarian Benefit Societies, Co-operatives, and Trade Unions. Their young, active and despotic prefects carry out more reforms in a few months than the municipalities they supersede could achieve in years, if at all. If the Leader is able and honest the success of his rule seems prodigious to nations accustomed to the futility of parliamentary governments. Already we have four famous Leaders, two European and two oriental, whose reigns have lasted longer than the Napoleonic empires and shew no signs of collapsing. The snag in Fascism is that as the Leaders, being perishable and mortal, must presently decay and die, and the assumption of their despotic powers by comparatively commonplace successors would turn their comparatively commonplace heads. Extreme cases: Tsar Paul and Nero. Need for a constitution workable by commonplace people in the long intervals between the births of political geniuses. Limitation of the scope of Fascism by the ignorances, prejudices, and superstitions of the thoughtless majority it has organized. They will applaud the Haussmannization of great cities like Paris and Rome but an attempt to municipalize the enormously increased rents on the new thoroughfares would mean in Communism, from which Fascism always pretends to save the world. As these rents are the source of the enormous inequalities of income created by Capitalism, Fascism cannot extricate itself from Capitalism and its evils except by adopting Communism, which its supporters will on no account allow it to do. It therefore cannot solve the social problem. It cannot expropriate the proprietary class as a whole but it can persecute and plunder unpopular sections of it, for instance, the Jews and the Churches. Fascism, in its anti-liberal aspect and its contempt for pseudo-democracy, resembles Communism in its earlier stages. Plausibility of Italian Fascism. Popularity of Militarist Fascism. Everybody a machine gunner at sixteen. Potential Praetorian guards. . . . . **442**

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waste is, and the Socialist revolt is against waste. Honor, health, and joy of heart are impossible under Capitalism. rich and poor are alike detestable both must cease to exist. Our need for neighbors whose interests do not compete with ours is against the principle of Capitalism. Waiting for dead men's shoes. The professions. Husband hunting. The social friction is intense. Capitalism puts sand instead of oil in all the bearings of our machinery. The remonstrance of the optimist. Natural kindness. Capitalism itself was better intentioned in its inception than early Christianity. Goodwill is not enough. it is dangerous until it finds the right way. Unreasoning sentiment an unsafe guide. We believe what we want to believe. if a pecuniary bias is given to our activities it will corrupt them in institution, teaching, and practice until the best intentioned citizens will know no honest methods and doctrines. In our search for disinterested service we come up against profiteering and Trade Unionism at every turn. Resultant cynicism and pessimism. Gulliver's Travels and Candide. Equality of income would make these terrible books mere clinical lectures on an extinct disease. The simple and noble meaning of gentility.

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## APPENDIX

Instead of a bibliography. The technical literature of Capitalism and Socialism mostly abstract, inhuman, and written in an academic jargon which only specialists find readable. Failure to define either capital or Socialism. The early Capitalist economists: their censor Ricardo, De Quincey, and Austin. The Socialist reaction: Proudhon and Marx. The academic reaction: John Stuart Mill, Cairnes, and Maynard Keynes. The artistic reaction: Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris. The reaction of the novelists: Dickens and Wells, Galsworthy and Bennett. The reaction in the theatre: Ibsen and Strindberg. Henry George and Land Nationalization. Literature of the conversion of Socialism from an insurrectionary movement in the liberal tradition to a constitutional one. Fabian Essays: Sidney and Beatrice Webb. The author's contributions.

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## THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM, CAPITALISM, SOVIETISM AND FASCISM

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### NATIONALIZATION OF BANKING

YOU now know enough about banking and the manufacture of money to understand that they are necessities of civilization. They are in some respects quite peculiar businesses. Banking heaps up huge masses of capital in the banker's hands for absolutely nothing but the provision of a till to put it in, and clerks to keep an account of it. Coinage is useless without a Government guarantee of the genuineness of the coins, and a code of laws making it a serious crime for any private person to make counterfeit coins, besides settling the limits within which coins that are stamped with more than their value as metal (called token coinage) can be used for paying debts.

As it is impossible for any private person or company to fulfil these coinage conditions satisfactorily, the manufacture of money is a nationalized business, unlike the manufacture of boots. You do not see a mint in every street as you see a bootmaker's. All the money is made in THE Mint, which is a Government factory of coins. If, in your disgust at the disagreeable white metal shillings which have been substituted since the war for the old silver ones, you were to set up a private mint of your own, you would be sent to prison for coining, even though you could prove that your nice shillings were worth more than the nasty ones of the Government. Formerly, if you had a quantity of gold, you could take it to the Mint, and have it made into sovereigns for you at a small charge for the King's image and guarantee called seignorage; but you were not allowed to make the coins for yourself out of your own gold. Today the Mint will not do that for you because it is easier for you to give your gold to your banker, who will give you credit for its worth in money. Thus the whole business is as strictly nationalized as that of the Post Office. Perhaps you do not know that you can be prosecuted for carrying a letter for hire instead of giving it to the Postmaster-General to carry. But you can, just as you can be prosecuted for making a coin, or for melting one down. And nobody objects. The people who, when it is proposed to nationalize the coal mines and the railways, shriek into your ears that nationalization is robbery and ruin, are so perfectly satisfied with the nationalization of the Mint that they never even notice that it is nationalized, poor dears!

However, private persons can issue a currency of their own, provided it is not an imitation of the Government currency. You may write a cheque, or a bill of exchange, and use it as paper money as often as you please; and no policeman can lay a finger on you for it provided (a) that you have enough Government money at your bank to meet the cheque when it is presented for payment, and (b) that the piece of paper on which your cheque is printed, or your bill of exchange drawn, bears no resemblance to a Treasury note or a bank note. An enormous volume of business is done today by these private currencies of cheques and bills of exchange. But they are not money: they are only title deeds to money, just as money itself is only a title deed to goods. If you owe money to your grocer he may refuse to take a cheque in payment; but if you offer him Treasury notes or sovereigns, he must take them whether he likes them or not. If you are trading with a manufacturer, and offer him a bill of exchange pledging you to pay for his goods in six months, he may refuse it and insist on Government money down on the nail. But he may not refuse Government money. Your offer of it is "legal tender".

Besides, money, as we have seen, is a measure of value; and cheques and bills are not. The cheques and bills would have no meaning and no use unless they were expressed in terms of money. They are all for so many pounds, shillings, and pence; and if there were no pounds, shillings, and pence in the background, a cheque would have to run "Pay to Emma Wilkins or Order two pairs of secondhand stockings, slightly laddered, my share of the family Pekingese dog, and half an egg". No banker would undertake to pay cheques of that sort. Both cheques and banking depend on the existence of nationalized money.

Banking is not yet nationalized; but it will be, because the public gain from nationalization will lead people to vote for it when they understand it just as they will vote for nationalization of the coal mines. Business people need capital to start and extend their businesses just as they need coal to warm themselves. As we have seen, when they want hundreds of thousands they get them by paying enormous commissions to financiers, who are so spoiled by huge profits they will not deign to look at what they regard as small business. Those who want tens of thousands are not catered for; and those who want modest hundreds are often driven to borrow from money lenders at high rates of interest because the bank manager does not think it worth the bank's while to let them overdraw. If you could shew these traders a bank working not to make

profits at the expense of its customers but to distribute capital as cheaply as possible for the good of the country to all the businesses, large or small, which needed it, they would rush to it and snap their fingers at the profiteering financiers. A national or municipal bank would be just that. It would bring down the price of capital just as nationalization of the coal mines would bring down the price of coal, by eliminating the profiteer; and all the profiteers except the money profiteers (financiers and bankers) will be finally converted to it by this prospect, because, though they aim at making as much profit as possible out of you when you go shopping, they are determined that other people shall make as little profit as possible out of them.

Nationalization of Banking therefore needs no Socialist advocacy to recommend it to the middle class. It is just as likely to be finally achieved by a Conservative Government as by a Labor one. The proof is that the first municipal bank has been established in Birmingham, which returns twelve members to Parliament of whom eleven are Conservatives, and strong ones at that. Its depositors are limited to £500 yearly; and it is not allowed to issue cheques; but it will soon break these fetters and lead to a development of municipal banking all over the manufacturing districts. Already there are other attempts, specialized and restricted in various ways, but with the root of the matter in them.

Meanwhile the bankers and financiers continue to assure us that their business is such a mysteriously difficult one that no Government or municipal department could deal with it successfully. They are right about the mystery, which is due to the fact that they only half understand their own business, and their customers do not understand it at all. By this time I hope you understand it much better than an average banker. But the difficulty is all nonsense. Let us see again what a bank has to do.

By simply offering to keep people's money safe for them, and to make payments out of it for them to anyone they choose to name (by cheque), and to keep a simple cash account of these payments for them, it gets into its hands a mass of spare money which it professes to keep at its customers' call, but which it finds by experience it can hire out to the extent of about sixteen shillings in the pound because each customer keeps a balance to his credit all the time. There is no mystery or difficulty about this. It can be done by government or municipal banks as easily as petty banking, with its currency of postal notes and stamps, is done by our national post offices and savings banks. The only part of it that is not auto-



matically successful is the hiring out of the money when it is paid in. A bank manager whose judgment was bad would very soon get his bank into difficulties by hiring out the spare money to traders who are in a bad way, either because their businesses were being superseded by new businesses, or because they were too honest, or not honest enough, or extravagant, or drunken, or lazy, or not good men of business, or poetically unfitted to succeed. But a manager who was too cautious to lend any money at all would be still more disastrous; for we must continually remember that the things represented by the spare money in the bank will not keep, and that if fifty billions' worth of food were saved out of the year's harvest and lodged in a State bank (or any other bank) it would be a dead loss and waste if it were not eaten pretty promptly by workers building up facilities for producing future harvests. The bank manager can choose the person to whom he lends the bank's spare money; but he cannot choose not to lend it at all; just as a baker, when he has sold all the bread he can for ready money, must either give credit for the rest to somebody or else throw the loaves into the dustbin.

Only, there is this difference between the baker and the banker. The baker can refrain from baking more loaves than he can reasonably expect to sell; but the banker may find himself leaped up with far more spare money than he can find safe hirers for; and then he has not only to take chances himself, but to tempt tradesmen by low rates of hire to take them ("the banks are granting credit freely" the city articles in the papers will say), whereas at other times his spare money will be so short that he will pick and choose and charge high interest ("the bankers are restricting credit"); and this is why it takes more knowledge and critical judgment to manage a bank than to run a baker's shop.

No wonder the bankers, who make enormous profits, and consequently have the greatest dread of having these cut off by the nationalization of banking, declare that no Government could possibly do this difficult work of hiring out money, and that it must be left to them, as they alone understand it! Now, to begin with, they neither understand it nor do it themselves. Their bad advice produced widespread ruin in Europe after the war, simply because they did not understand the rudiments of their business, and persisted in reasoning on the assumption that spent capital still exists, and that credit is something solid that can be eaten and drunk and worn and lived in. The people who do the really successful work of hiring out the heaps of spare money in the bank for use

in business are not the bankers but the bank managers, who are only employees. Their position as such is not more eligible either in money or social standing than that of an upper division civil servant, and is in many respects much less eligible. They would be only too glad to be civil servants instead of private employees. As to the superior direction which deals with what may be called the wholesale investment of the banked spare money as distinguished from its retail hirings to ordinary tradesmen and men of business, the pretence that this could not be done by the Treasury or any modern public finance department is a tale for the marines. The Bank of England is as glad to have a former Treasury official on its staff as the London Midland and Scottish Railway to have a former civil servant for its Chairman.

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## COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZATION

By the way, when demonstrating the need for the nationalization of banking to you I did not forget that you may be a bank shareholder, and that your attention may have been distracted by your wonder as to what will become of your shares when the banks are nationalized. I have had to consider this question rather closely myself, because, as it happens, my wife is a bank shareholder. We might have to cut down our household expenses if everyone went to a national or municipal bank instead of to her bank. In fact, when banking is nationalized, private banking will probably be made a crime, like private coining or letter carrying. So we shall certainly insist on the Government buying her shares when it nationalizes banking.

The Government will buy them willingly enough, for the excellent reason that it will get the money by taxing all capitalists' incomes; so that if my wife were the only capitalist in the country the transaction would be as broad as it was long: the Government would take from her with one hand what it gave her with the other. Fortunately for her there are plenty of other capitalists to be taxed along with her; so that instead of having to provide all the money to buy herself out, she will have to provide only a little bit of it; and all the little bits that the other capitalists will have to provide will go into her pocket. This transaction is called Compensation.

It is very important that you should grasp this quaint process which seems so perfectly fair and ordinary. It explains how Governments compensate without really compensating, and how such compensation costs the nation nothing, being really a method of

**expropriation.** Just consider. If the Government purchases a piece of land or a railway or a bank or a coal mine, and pays for it out of the taxes, it is evident that the Government gets it for nothing: it is the taxpayers who pay. And if the tax is a tax like the income tax, from which the bulk of the nation is wholly or partially exempt, or the supertax and estate duties, which fall on the capitalist classes only, then the Government has compelled the capitalist class to buy out one of themselves and present her property to the nation without any compensation whatever. The so-called compensation is only an adjustment by which the loss is shared by the whole capitalist class instead of being borne wholly by the particular member of it whose piece of land or bank shares or other property the Government happens to want. Even that member pays her share of the tax without compensation.

Some ladies may find this clearer if an imaginary case is put before them in figures. Suppose the Government wants a piece of land of the market value of £1000! Suppose it raises that sum, not by taxing the nation, but by taxing the incomes of a hundred rich landlords, including the owner of the piece of land, making each of them contribute £10! The Government then takes the piece of land, and solemnly hands £1000 to its former owner, telling him that he has nothing to complain of, as he has been paid the full market value of his land instead of having had it wrested from him violently in a revolutionary manner, as the Bolsheviks took the land from the Russian landlords in 1917. Nothing can be more reasonable and constitutional and customary: the most Conservative Government might do it; in fact (except for the substitution of all the landlords for a hundred selected ones) Conservative Governments have done it over and over again. None the less, at the end of the transaction a piece of land has passed from private property into national property; and a hundred landlords have had their incomes reduced by ten shillings a year each (the interest on £10 at 5 per cent). It is quite clear that if such a transaction is repeated often enough the nation will have all the land, the incomes of the landlords will be reduced to nothing, although every acre has been bought from its owner at full market price. The process can be applied to bank shares or any other shares as easily as to acres.

Let me repeat that this is not something that may be done: it is something that has been done and is being done. It has gone so far already that a huge quantity of property formerly owned by private persons is now owned by the Government and the municipalities: that is, by the nation; whilst taxation has risen to such a point that

the rich have to remind themselves continually that their pounds are only thirteen-and-fourpences or less, because the Government will take the other six and eightpence or more as income tax and supertax, and that even out of the thirteen and fourpence the municipalities of the places where their houses are (rich men keep from two to five houses) will take a considerable dollop in rates for pure Communism. At present they are selling their houses in all directions to speculators and contractors who have made large fortunes out of Inflation and War; but these New Rich will in their turn be forced to buy one another out just as the Old Rich, now called the New Poor, were.

In this way you get the constitutional rule for nationalization of private property, which is, always to pay the full market price or more to the proprietors for every scrap of property nationalized. Pay for it by taxing incomes derived from property (there is, of course, no compensation for taxation). Your own rule as a voter should be never to vote for a candidate who advocates expropriation without compensation, whether he calls himself a Socialist or Communist, in which case he does not understand his own political business, or a Liberal. The Liberal impulse is almost always to give a dog a bad name and hang him: that is, to denounce the menaced proprietors as enemies of mankind, and ruin them in a transport of virtuous indignation. But Liberals are not, as such, hostile to capitalists, nor indeed to anybody but publicans and imaginary feudal landlords. Conservatives are practically always for compensation to property owners; and they are right; but they do not see through the trick of it as you now do.

Anyhow, always vote against the no-compensation candidate unless you are opposed to nationalization, and are subtle enough to see that the surest way to defeat it is to advocate its being carried out vindictively without a farthing of compensation.

There is, however, an alternative to compensated nationalization of private industries. Why should not the Government set up for itself in the industry it desires to nationalize, and extinguish its private competitors just as the big multiple shops extinguish the small shops, by underselling them, and by all the other methods of competitive trade? The Birmingham municipality has begun the nationalization of banking without troubling itself about the private banks: it has simply opened its bank in the street and gone ahead. The parcel post was established without any compensation to private carriers; and the Cash on Delivery development of it was effected without any consideration for the middlemen whom it

superseded. Private employers have always proceeded in this manner on competitive principles: why should not the State, as public employer, do just the same?

The reason is that the competitive method is an extremely wasteful one. When two bakeries are set up in a district that could be quite well served by one, or two milk carts ply in the same street, each trying to snatch the other's custom, it means that the difference between the cost of running two and one is sheer waste. When a woman wears out her hat, or rather when the hatmakers change the fashion so as to compel her to buy a new hat before the one she is wearing is half worn out, and fifty shops make new hats on the chance of selling that one to her, there is overproduction, with its sequel of unemployment.

Now apply this to, for example, the nationalization of railways. The Government could, no doubt, construct a network of State railways parallel with the existing railways; so that you could go from London to Penzance either by the Great Western or by a new State line running side by side with it. The State could then, by introducing the system of Penny Transport proposed by Mr Whately Arnold on the lines of Penny Postage, undersell the separate private companies and take all their traffic from them. That would be the competitive method. Then there would be two railways to Penzance and Thurso and Bristol and Cromer and everywhere else, one of them carrying nearly all the traffic, and the other carrying only its leavings and holiday overflows until it fell into hopeless and dangerous decay and ruin.

But can you imagine anything more idiotically wasteful? The cost of making the competing State railway would be enormous, and quite unnecessary. The ruin of the private railway would be sheer destruction of a useful and sufficient means of communication which had itself cost a huge sum. The land occupied by one of the railways would be wasted. What Government in its senses would propose such a thing when it could take over the existing railways by compensating the shareholders in the manner I have described; that is, distributing their loss over the propertied class without a farthing of expense to the nation as a whole?

The same considerations must lead the State to take over the existing banks. Municipal banks on the Birmingham model may be competing banks; but when a national banking service comes, it will come by way of nationalizing the existing private banks.

There is another objection to the competitive method. If the State is to compete with private enterprise, it must allow private enter-

prise to compete with it. Now this is not practicable if the full advantage of nationalization is to be obtained. The Post Office is able to establish a letter service in every village in the country, and a telephone and telegraph service in most of them; but he does so only on condition that profiteers are not allowed to come in and pick out the easy bits of the business to exploit for themselves as the parcel carrying profiteers do. The Postmaster-General does things for the nation that no profiteer would or could do; but his rule is All or Nothing.

A Banker-General would have to insist on the same rule. He would establish banks, if not literally everywhere, at least in hundreds of places where the private banks would no more dream of opening a branch, even on the open-once-a-week scale, than of building a Grand Opera House. But he, too, would say "All or Nothing; I will not have any intelligent Jewish gentleman, or rapacious Christian person trained in the intelligent Jewish gentleman's office, picking the plums out of my pudding".

Yet do not conclude that all State activities will be State monopolies. Indeed the nationalization of banking will certainly enlarge the possibilities of private activity in all sorts of ways. But as the big public services will have to be made practically ubiquitous, charging more than they cost in one place and less in another, they must be protected against sectional private competition. Otherwise we should have what prevails at present in municipal building, where all the lucrative contracts for the houses of the rich and the offices of the capitalists and the churches and institutions and so forth go to the private employer, whilst the municipality may build only dwellings for the poor at a loss, which they conceal from the ratepayers by fictitious figures as to the value of the land. Municipal building is always insolvent. If it had a monopoly it could afford to make every town in the land a ratepayers' and tenants' paradise.

This reminds me to remind you that every nationalization of an industry or service involves the occupation of land by the State. This land should always be nationalized by purchase and compensation. For if it is merely rented, as I am sorry to say it sometimes is, the charges made to the public must be raised by the amount of the rent, thus giving the ground landlord the money value of all the advantages of the nationalization.

I have said nothing about one of the cruellest effects of superseding an industry by competition instead of buying it up. The process consists fundamentally of the gradual impoverishment and ruin of those who are carrying on the superseded business.

Capitalism is ruthless on this point: its principle is "Each for himself; and devil take the hindmost!" But the State has to consider the loser as well as the winner. It must not impoverish anybody. It must let the loser down easily; and there is no other way of doing this except the way of purchase and compensation.

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## PRELIMINARIES TO NATIONALIZATION

You now see that nationalization and municipalization are so desirable as a means of cheapening the things we all need that the most violently anti-Socialist Parliaments and municipal corporations have established nationalized and municipalized industries in the past, and are quite likely to do so in future under electoral pressure from Conservative voters. You see also that the alleged enormous expense of buying out private owners, which has been alleged by a Coal Commission as an insuperable objection to the nationalization of our coal mines, is a bogey, because, though the coalowners (of whom, by the way, I am one) will be fully compensated, the proprietary class as a whole will pay the bill out of their unearned incomes, leaving the nation richer instead of poorer by the transaction. So far so good. Theoretically, nationalization is perfectly sound.

Practically, it takes, as the people very accurately put it, a lot of doing. A mere proclamation that such and such an industry is nationalized can do nothing but just put a stop to it. Before any industry or service can be effectively nationalized a new department of the Civil Service must be created to carry it on. Unless we had a War Office we could not have an army, because no soldier could get his pay, or his uniform, or his weapons. Without an Admiralty, no navy. Without a General Post Office and a Postmaster-General, no letters in the morning. Without a Royal Mint and a Master of the Mint, no money. Without Scotland Yard in London and Watch Committees in the country, no police. And as in the present so in the future. Without a great extension of the Treasury, banking cannot be nationalized, nor coal without the creation of a Department of Mines much bigger than our existing Department of Woods and Forests, nor railways without a Railway Board and a Railroadmaster-General as important as the Post Office and the Postmaster-General.

Such institutions can be set up by stable and highly organized States only, which means—and here is the political moral of it—that they cannot be done by revolutions, or by improvised dic-

tatorships, or even by permanent States in which, as in America, where in some cases the civil services are still regarded as the spoils of office, a new set of officials oust the old ones whenever the Opposition ousts the Government. What a revolution can do towards nationalization is to destroy the political power of the class which opposes nationalization. But such a revolution by itself cannot nationalize; and the new Government it sets up may be unable even to carry on the nationalized services it finds in existence, and be obliged to abandon them to private enterprise.

A nationalizing Government must also be financially honest, and determined to make the nationalization a success, and neither plunder it to eke out the general revenue, nor discredit and wreck it so as to have an excuse for giving the nationalized service back to the private profiteers. State railways have sometimes been standing examples of what State management can be at its worst. The Governments, instead of keeping the railways in proper repair, grabbed all the money paid by the public in fares and freightage; applied it to the relief of general taxation; and let the stations and rolling stock decay until their railways were the worst in the world, and there was a general clamor for their denationalization. Private profiteering enterprises have gone to pieces in the same way and worse; but, as they have been responsible to themselves only, their failures and frauds have passed unnoted, whilst the failures and frauds of Governments have raised great popular agitations and even provoked revolutions. The misdeeds of Governments are public and conspicuous: the misdeeds of private traders are practically invisible: and thus an illusion is created that Governments are less honest and efficient than private traders. It is only an illusion; but all the same, honesty and good faith are as necessary in nationalized businesses as in private ones. Our British nationalized services are held up as models of integrity; yet the Postmaster-General overcharges us a little for our letters, and puts the profit into the pockets of the propertied class in the form of reduced income tax; and the Admiralty is continually fighting against the tendency to keep down taxation by starving the navy. These deprecations do not amount to much; but they illustrate what may be done when voters are not vigilant and well instructed.

OUR study of nationalization by compensated or distributed confiscation has no doubt relieved you from all anxiety as to the need



for nationalization without compensation. But there is always a loud-mouthed, virtuously indignant political group, still saturated with the revolutionary traditions of Liberalism, which opposes compensation. If the property owner is, in effect, a thief, they say, why should he be compensated for being compelled to cease to do evil and learn to do well? If by taxation we can make the whole capitalist class find the money to buy out the coalowners, and thus transfer their property to the nation to that extent, why not take the rest of their property simply for the sake of transferring it also to the nation? Our joint stock companies work as well with one set of shareholders as with another: in fact their shares change hands so continually in the Money Market that they never have the same set of shareholders from one working day to the next. If all the railway shares in the country were held on Monday by the inhabitants of Park Lane, and on Tuesday by the British Government, the railways would go on just the same. In like case so would any other of the great industrial services now in joint stock ownership. If a landlord had to hand over the title-deeds of half a dozen farms and an urban street to the Exchequer, the farmers would go on farming, and the tenants go on living in the street, unaffected by the obligation to pay their rents in future to an agent of the Government instead of to the agent of a duke or any other plutocrat. The business of a bank would proceed just as smoothly after as before the owners had handed over their claims on its profits to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then why not at once push taxation of capital to the point at which the capitalist taxpayer, unable to find the money, will be forced to surrender to the Government his share certificates, his War Loan interest, and his title-deeds? The share certificates would not be worth a farthing on the Stock Exchange, because there would be all sellers and no buyers there; but none the less each certificate would, like the title-deeds to the land, carry the right to an income out of the future harvests of the country; and if the Government could immediately use that income for the benefit of the nation, it would be extremely well worth its while to get hold of it by accepting the certificates at their face value.

It could even do so with a show of generosity: for it could say to the capitalist "You owe the tax collector a thousand pounds (say); but instead of selling you up we are authorizing him to give you a clean receipt, not for the money, but for ten paper certificates marked a hundred pounds each, for which the cleverest stock-broker in London could not get you twopence". "But", exclaims the cornered capitalist, "what becomes of my income? What am I

to do for a living?" "Work for it, as others have to do", is the reply. In short, from the point of view of its Socialist advocates, taxation of capital, though absurd as a means of raising ready money for the expenses of Government, is a way of confiscating without compensation the title-deeds of, and thereby nationalizing, the land and the mines and the railways and all the other industries which the capitalists now hold as their private property.

The scheme is plausible enough.

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### REVOLT OF THE PARASITIC PROLETARIAT

BUT there is an objection to it; and that objection may be learnt from the stupidest woman you ask in the street. She will tell you that you must not take away the property of the rich, because "they give employment". Now, as we have seen, it is quite true that fundamentally it is nonsense to say that an unproductive rich person can give employment in any other sense than as a lunatic gives employment to her keeper. An idle rich woman can give no productive employment: the employment she gives is wasteful. But wasteful or not, she gives it and pays for it. She may not have earned the money she pays with; but it will buy as good bread and clothes for her employee as the most honestly earned money in the kingdom. The idler is a parasite; and the idler's employee, however industrious, is therefore a parasite on a parasite; but if you leave the parasite destitute you leave the parasite's parasites destitute; and unless you have productive employment ready for them they will have to starve or steal or rebel; and as they will certainly not choose to starve, their choice of the remaining two alternatives (which they will probably combine) may upset the Government if they are numerous enough. And they are, as a matter of fact, very numerous, as you may see by counting the Conservative votes that are given at every General Election by people who work for weekly wages in wholly or partly parasitic occupations. The plunder of the proletariat is shared handsomely by the plunderers with the proletarians. If our capitalists could not plunder our proletarians, our proletarians and their middle class organizers, from the Bond Street art dealers and jewellers to the errand boys of Bournemouth, could not live on the custom of our capitalists. That is why neither Bond Street nor Bournemouth can be persuaded to vote for uncompensated expropriation, and why, if it came to fighting instead of voting, they would fight against it.

The trouble would begin, not with the nationalized industries,

but with the others. As we have seen, the mines and banks and railways, being already organized as going concerns, and managed by directors elected by the votes of the shareholders, could be confiscated by taxing the shareholders heavily enough to oblige them to transfer their shares to the Government in payment of the tax. But the income derived from these shares would therefore go into the pocket of the Government instead of into the pockets of the shareholders. Thus the purchasing power of the shareholders would pass to the Government; and every shop or factory that depended on their custom would have to shut up and discharge all its employees. The saving power of the shareholders, which means, as we now understand, the power of supplying the spare money needed for starting new industrial enterprises or extending old ones to keep pace with civilization, would also pass to the Government. These powers, which must be kept in action without a moment's interruption, operate by continual expenditure (mainly household expenditure) and continual investment of the enormous total of all our private incomes.

What could the Government do with that total? If it simply dropped it into the national till, and sat on it, most of it would perish by natural decay, and meanwhile a great many of the people would perish too. There would be a monster epidemic of bankruptcy and unemployment. The tide of calamity would sweep away any Government unless it proclaimed itself a Dictatorship, and employed, say, a third of the population to shoot down another third, whilst the remaining third footed the bill with its labor. What could the Government do to avert this, short of handing back the confiscated property to the owners with apologies for having made a fool of itself?

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## SAFETY VALVES

It could distribute the money in doles; but that would only spread the very evil the confiscation was intended to destroy: that is to say, the evil of unearned income. A much sounder plan (and do not forget this when next you are tempted to give a spare £5 note to a beggar instead of putting it on deposit at your bank) would be to throw all the money into the confiscated banks, and lend it to employers at unprecedentedly cheap rates. Another expedient would be to raise wages handsomely in the confiscated industries. Another, the most desperate of all, but by no means the least probable, would be to go to war, and waste on the soldier the incomes formerly wasted on the plutocrat.

These expedients do not exclude one another. Doles, cheap capital available in Government-owned banks, and high wages, could be resorted to simultaneously to redistribute purchasing power and employing power. The doles and pensions would tide over the remaining years of those discharged servants of the ruined rich who were incapable of changing their occupations, and of the ruined rich themselves. The cheap capital at the banks would enable employers to start new businesses, or modify old ones, and to cater for the increased purchasing power of the workers whose wages had been raised, thereby giving employment to the workers who had lost their jobs in Bournemouth or Bond Street. The art dealers could sell pictures to the National Gallery and the provincial municipal galleries. There would be a crisis; but what of that? Capitalism has often enough produced displacements of purchasing power and loss of livelihood to large bodies of citizens, and fallen back on doles in the shape of Mansion House Funds and the like as safety valves to ease the pressure when the unemployed began to riot and break windows. Why should we not muddle through as we have always done?

Well, we might. But serious as the biggest crises of Capitalism have been, they have never been as big as the crash that would follow confiscation by the Government of the entire property of the whole propertied class without any preparation for the immediate productive employment not only of the expropriated owners (who are too few to give much trouble) but of the vast parasitic proletariat who produce their luxuries. Would the safety valves act quickly enough and open widely enough? We must examine them more closely before we can judge.

A civilized country depends on the circulation of its money as much as a living animal depends on the circulation of its blood. A general confiscation of private property and its incomes would produce an unprecedented congestion in London, where the national Treasury is, of money from all over the kingdom; and it would become a matter of life or death for the Government to pump that congested money promptly back again to the extremities of the land. Remember that the total sum congested would be much larger than under the capitalist system, because, as the capitalists spend much more of their incomes than they save, the huge amount of this expenditure would be saved and added to the Government revenue from the confiscated property.

Now for the safety valves. A prodigious quantity of the congested money would come from the confiscated ground rents of our cities

and towns. The present proprietors spend these rents where they please; and they seldom please to spend them in the places where they were produced by the work of the inhabitants. A plutocrat does not decide to live in Bootle when he is free to live in Biarritz. The inhabitants of Bootle do not get the benefit of his expenditure, which goes to the west end of London and to the pleasure resorts and sporting grounds of all the world, though perhaps a little of it may come back if the town manufactures first class boots and riding breeches and polo mallets. The dwellers in the town enjoy a good deal of municipal communism; but they have to pay for it in rates which are now oppressively heavy everywhere. And they would be heavier still if the Government did not make what are called Grants-in-Aid to the municipalities.

An obvious safety valve, and a popular one with the ratepayers, would be the payment of the rates by the Treasury through greatly increased grants. If you are a ratepaying householder, and your landlord were suddenly to announce that in future he would pay the rates, you would rejoice in the prospect of having that much more money to spend on yourself. A similar announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be equally welcome. It would relieve the congestion at the Treasury, and send a flood of money back from the heart to the extremities.

Then there is the combination of raised wages in the confiscated industries with a flood of cheap capital pumped to all the business centres through the confiscated banks. The raised wages would check the flow of income to the Treasury by reducing dividends; and the cheapening of capital would enable new businesses to be started and old ones re-equipped to meet the demand created by the increased purchasing power (pocket money) of the wage workers and the disburdened ratepayers.

And there is always a good deal to be done in the way of public expenditure on roads, on reclamations of land from the sea; on afforestation; on building great dams across valleys and barrages across rivers and tideways to concentrate waterflow on turbine engines; on stations for the distribution of the power thus gained; on the demolition of slum towns that should never have been built, and their replacement by properly planned, healthy and handsome garden cities; and on a hundred other things that Capitalism never dreams of doing because it is impossible to appropriate their advantages as commercial profit. The demand for labor created by such operations would absorb all the employable unemployed, and leave only the superannuated and the incurably unemployable on

the dole, with, of course, the children, on whom much more money could and should be spent than at present, with great uncommercial profit to the next generation.

All this sounds very reassuring, and costs little to describe on paper. But a few minutes' reflection will dispel all hope that it could occur instantly and spontaneously through the uncompensated transfer of all existing shares and title-deeds to the Government. The Ministry of Health would have to produce a huge scheme for the grants-in-aid to the cities; and Parliament would wrangle for months over it. As to glutting the existing banks with spare money to lend without any further interference with them, the results would include an orgy of competitive enterprise, overcapitalization, overproduction, hopeless shops and businesses started by inexperienced or silly or rash people or people who are all three; in short, a boom followed by a slump, with the usual unemployment, bankruptcies, and so forth. To keep that part of the program under control, it would be necessary to set up a new department of the Treasury to replace the present boards of predatory company directors; to open banks wherever the post offices are doing substantial business; and to staff the new banks with specially trained civil servants. And all that would take longer than it takes a ruined citizen to starve.

As to raising industrial wages and reducing prices with the object of eliminating profit, that is so precisely the contrary of the policy which the existing managers of our industry have trained themselves to pursue, and which alone they understand, that their replacement by civil servants would be just as necessary as in the case of the banks. Such replacements could be effected only as part of an elaborate scheme requiring long preliminary cogitation and a practical preparation involving the establishment of new public departments of unprecedented magnitude.

Public works, too, cannot be set on foot offhand in the manner of Czar Nicholas I, who, when asked to dictate the route to be taken by the railway from Moscow to Petrograd, took up a ruler and drew a straight line on the map from the word Moscow to the Neva. If Nicholas had had to get a proposal for a turbine barrage through a parliament with a fiery Welsh contingent determined that it should be across the Severn, and an equally touchy Scots contingent bent on having it across the Kyle of Tongue, he would have found many months slipping by him before he could set the first gang of navvies to work.

I need not weary you by multiplying instances. Wholesale

nationalization without compensation is catastrophic: the patient dies before the remedy has time to operate. If you prefer a mechanical metaphor, the boiler bursts because the safety valves jam. The attempted nationalization would produce a revolution. You may say "Well, why not? What I have read in this book has made me impatient for a revolution. The fact that any measure would produce a revolution is its highest recommendation."

If that is your view, your feelings do you credit: they are or have been shared by many good citizens. But when you go thoroughly into the matter you will realize that revolutions do not nationalize anything, and often make it much more difficult to nationalize them than it would have been without the revolution if only the people had had some education in political economy. If a revolution were produced by unskilled Socialism (all our parliamentary parties are dangerously unskilled at present) in the teeth of a noisy and inveterate Capitalist Opposition, it would produce reaction instead of progress, and give Capitalism a new lease of life. The name of Socialism would stink in the nostrils of the people for a generation. And that is just the sort of revolution that an attempt to nationalize all property at a blow would provoke. You must therefore rule out revolution on this particular issue of out-and-out uncompensated and unprepared general nationalization versus a series of carefully prepared and compensated nationalizations of one industry after another.

Later on, we shall expatiate a little on what revolutions can do and what they cannot. Meanwhile, note as a canon of nationalization (economists like to call their rules for doing anything canons) that all nationalizations must be prepared and compensated. This will be found an effectual safeguard against too many nationalizations being attempted at a time. We might even say against more than one nationalization being attempted at a time; only we must not forget that industries are now so amalgamated before they are ripe for nationalization that it is practically impossible to nationalize one without nationalizing half a dozen others that are inextricably mixed up with it. You would be surprised to learn how many other things a railway company does besides running trains. And if you have ever gone to sea in a big liner you have perhaps sometimes looked round you and wondered whether the business of making it was called shipbuilding or hotel building, to say nothing of engineering.

## WHY CONFISCATION HAS SUCCEEDED HITHERTO

Now that I have impressed on you at such length as a canon of nationalization that Parliament must always buy the owners out and not simply tax them out, I am prepared to be informed that the canon is dead against the facts, because the direct attack on property by simple confiscation: that is, by the Government taking the money of the capitalists away from them by main force and putting it into the public treasury, has already, without provoking reaction or revolution, been carried by Conservative and Liberal Governments to lengths which would have seemed monstrous and incredible to nineteenth century statesmen like Gladstone, proving that you can introduce almost any measure of Socialism or Communism into England provided you call it by some other name. Propose Socialistic confiscation of the incomes of the rich, and the whole country will rise to repel such Russian wickedness. Call it income tax, supertax, and estate duties, and you can lift enough hundreds of millions from the pockets of our propertied class to turn the Soviet of Federated Russian Republics green with envy.

Take a case or two in figures. Gladstone thought it one of his triumphs as Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the income tax to twopence in the pound, and hoped to be able to abolish it altogether. Instead of which it went up to six shillings in 1920, and stopped at that only because it was supplemented by an additional income tax (Supertax or Surtax) on the larger incomes, and a partial abolition of inheritance which makes the nation heir to a considerable part of our property when we die possessed of any. Just imagine the fuss there would have been over this if it had been proposed by a Socialist Prime Minister as Confiscation, Expropriation, and Nationalization of Inheritance on the Communist principles of the prophet Marx! Yet we took it lying down.

You have perhaps not noticed how this taxation is arrived at in Parliament at present. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the Minister who has to arrange the national housekeeping for the year, and screw out of a reluctant House of Commons its consent to tax us for the housekeeping money; for with the negligible exception of the interest on certain shares in the Suez Canal and in some ten companies who had to be helped to keep going during the war the nation has no income from property. Whom he will be allowed to tax depends on the sort of members who have been returned to



Parliament. Without their approval his Budget, as he calls his proposals for taxation, cannot become law; and until it becomes law nobody can be compelled to pay the taxes. In Gladstone's time Parliament consisted practically of landlords and capitalists and employers, the handful of working class members being hopelessly outvoted by the other three sections combined, or even single. Each of these sections naturally tried to throw as much of the burden of taxation as possible on the others; but all three were heartily agreed in throwing on the working class as much of it as they could without losing too many working class votes at the next election. Therefore the very last tax they wished to sanction was the income tax, which all of them had to pay directly, and which the wage workers escaped, as it does not apply to small incomes. Thus the income tax became a sort of residual tax or last resort: an evil to be faced only when every other device for raising money had been found insufficient. When Gladstone drove it down from sixpence to fourpence, and from fourpence to twopence, and expressed his intention of doing without it altogether, he was considered a very great Chancellor of the Exchequer indeed. To do this he had to raise money by putting taxes on food and drink and tobacco, on legal documents of different kinds, from common receipts and cheques and contracts to bills of exchange, share certificates, marriage settlements, leases and the like. Then there were the customs, or duties payable on goods sent into the country from abroad. The industrial employers, who were great importers of raw materials, and wanted food to be cheap because cheap food meant low wages, said "Let them come in free, and tax the landlords". The country gentlemen said "Tax imports, especially corn, to encourage agriculture". This created the great Free Trade controversy on which the Tories fought the Liberals for so many years. But both parties always agreed that income tax should not be imposed until every other means of raising the money had been exhausted, and that even then it should be kept down to the lowest possible figure.

When Socialism became Fabianized and began to influence Parliament through a new proletarian Labor Party, budgeting took a new turn. The Labor Party demanded that the capitalists should be the first to pay, and not the last, and that the taxation should be higher on unearned than on earned incomes. This involved a denial of the need for keeping Government expenditure and taxation down to the lowest possible figure. When taxation consists in taking money away from people who have not earned it and

restoring it to its real earners by providing them with schools, better houses, improved cities, and public benefits of all sorts, then clearly the more the taxation the better for the nation. Where Gladstone cried "I have saved the income tax payers of the country another million. Hurrah!" a Labor Chancellor will cry "I have wrung another million from the supertaxed idlers, and spent it on the welfare of our people! Hooray!"

Thus for the last fifteen years we have had a running struggle in Parliament between the Capitalist and Labor parties: the former trying to keep down the income tax, the supertax, the estate duties, and public expenditure generally, and the latter trying to increase them. The annual debates on the Budget always turn finally on this point, though it is seldom frankly faced; and the capitalists have been losing bit by bit until now (in the nineteen-twenties) we have advanced from Gladstone's income tax of 2d. in the pound to rates of from four to six shillings, with, on incomes exceeding £2000, surtaxes that range from eighteen pence to six shillings according to the amount of the income; whilst on the death of a property owner his heirs have to hand over to the Government a share of the estate ranging from one per cent of its fictitious capital value when it is a matter of a little over £100, to forty per cent when it exceeds a couple of millions.

That is to say, if your uncle leaves you five guineas a year you have to pay the Government seventy-three days' income. If he leaves you a hundred thousand a year you pay eight years' income, and starve for the eight years unless you can raise the money by mortgaging your future income, or have provided for it by insuring your life at a heavy premium for the nation's benefit.

Now suppose the income of a hundred thousand a year belongs to an aristocratic family in which military service as an officer is a tradition which is practically obligatory. In a war the unmarried owner of such a property and his two brothers next in succession may be killed within a few weeks. Special exemption has to be granted to prevent the Inland Revenue Commissioners from confiscating £78,000 of the income. No such exemption is granted in the case of accident or epidemic. If we were to read in *The Morning Post* that the Russian Soviet had taken £78,000 a year from a private family without paying a penny of compensation, most of us would thank heaven that we were not living in a country where such Communistic monstrosities are possible. Yet our British anti-Socialist Governments, both Liberal and Conservative, do it as a matter of routine, though their Chancellors of the Exchequer go

on making speeches against Socialistic confiscation as if nobody outside Russia ever dreamt of such a thing!

That is just like us. All the time we are denouncing Communism as a crime, every street lamp and pavement and water tap and police constable is testifying that we could not exist for a week without it. Whilst we are shouting that Socialistic confiscation of the incomes of the rich is robbery and must end in red revolution, we are actually carrying it so much further than any other fully settled country that many of our capitalists have gone to live in the south of France for seven months in the year to avoid it, though they affirm their undying devotion to their native country by insisting that our national anthem shall be sung every Sunday on the Riviera as part of the English divine service, whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer at home implores heaven to "frustrate their knavish tricks" until he can devise some legal means of defeating their evasions of his tax collectors.

But startling from the Victorian point of view as are the sums taken annually from the rich, they have not in the lump gone beyond what the property owners can pay in cash out of their incomes, nor what the Government is prepared to throw back into circulation again by spending it immediately. They have transferred purchasing power from the rich to the poor, producing minor commercial crises here and there, and often seriously impoverishing the old rich; but they have been accompanied by such a development of capitalism that there are more rich, and richer rich, than ever; so that the luxury trades have had to expand instead of contract, giving more employment instead of less. And they have proved that you may safely confiscate income derived from property provided you can immediately redistribute it. But you cannot tax it to extinction at a single mortal blow. You have always to consider most carefully how far and how fast you can go without crashing. The rule that the Government must not tax at all until it has an immediate use for the money it takes is fundamental: it holds in every case. The rule that if it uses it to nationalize an already established commercial industry or service it must have a new public department ready to take the business over, and must compensate the owners from whom it takes it, is also invariable. When the object is not nationalization, but simple redistribution of income within the capitalist system by transferring purchasing power from one set of people to another, usually from a richer set to a poorer set, thus changing the demand in the shops from dear luxuries to comparatively cheap necessities, then the process must

go no faster than the capitalist shops can adapt themselves to this change. Else it may produce enough bankruptcies to make the Government very unpopular at the next election.

Let us study a sensational instance in which we have incurred a heavy additional burden of unearned income so strongly resented by the mass of the people that our Governments, whether Labor or Conservative, may not long be able to resist the demand for its redistribution.

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## HOW THE WAR WAS PAID FOR

IN 1914 we went to war. War is frightfully expensive and frightfully destructive. It rests its in a dead loss as far as money is concerned. And everything has to be paid for on the nail, for you cannot kill Germans with promissory notes or mortgages or national debts; you must have actual stores of food, clothing, weapons, munitions, fighting men, and nursing, car driving, munition making women of military age. When the army has worn out the clothes and eaten up the food, and fired off the munitions, and shed its blood in rivers, there is nothing eatable, drinkable, wearable, or livable-in left to shew for it: nothing visible or tangible but ruin and desolation. For most of these military stores the Government in 1914-18 went heavily into debt. It took the blood and work of the young men as a matter of course, compelling them to serve whether they liked it or not, and breaking up their businesses, when they had any, without compensation of any kind. But being a Capitalist Government it did not take all the needed ready money from the capitalists in the same way. It took some of it by taxation. But in the main, it borrowed it.

Naturally the Labor Party objected very strongly to this exemption of the money of the rich from the conscription that was applied ruthlessly to the lives and livelihoods and limbs of the poor. Its protests were disregarded. The spare subsistence needed to support the soldiers and the workers who were producing food and munitions for them, instead of being all taken without compensation by taxation, was for the most part hired from capitalists, their price being the right to take without working, for every hundred pounds worth of spare subsistence lent, five pounds a year out of the future income of the country for waiting until the hundred pounds they put down was repaid to them in full.

Roughly, and in round figures, what happened was that the National Debt of 660 millions owing in 1914 from former wars was

increased by the new war to over 7000 millions. Until we are able to repay this in full we have to pay more than 350 millions a year to the lenders for waiting; and as the current expenses of our civil services (300 millions), with our army, our navy, our air force, and all the other socialized national establishments, come to more than as much again, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has now to budget for more than two millions a day, and get that out of our pockets as best he can. And as it is no use asking the proletarians for it at a time when perhaps a million or so of them are unemployed, and have to be supported out of the taxes instead of paying any, he has to make the property holders contribute, in income tax, supertax, and estate duties, over 380 millions a year: that is, a million and fifty thousand a day, or more than half the total taxation. This is confiscation with a vengeance.

Does it strike you that there is something funny about this business of borrowing most of the 7000 millions from our own capitalists by promising to pay them, say, 325 millions a year whilst they are waiting for repayment, and then taxing them to the tune of 382 millions a year to pay not only their own waiting money but that of the foreign lenders as well? They are paying over 50 millions a year more than they are getting, and are therefore, as a class, losing by the transaction. The Government pays them with one hand, and takes the money back again, plus over 17 per cent interest, with the other. Why do they put up with it so tamely?

The explanation is easy. If the Government took back from each holder of War Loan exactly what it had paid him plus three and sixpence in the pound, all the holders would very promptly cry "Thank you for worse than nothing: we will cancel the debt; and much good may it do you". But that is not what happens. The holders of War Loan Stock are only a part of the general body of property owners; but all the property owners have to pay income tax and death duties, and, when their income exceeds £2000, supertax. Those who did not lend money to the Government for the war get nothing from it. Those who did lend get the 325 millions a year all to themselves; but their liability for the taxation out of which it is paid is shared with all the other property owners. Therefore, though the property owners as a whole lose by the transaction, those property owners who hold War Loan Stock gain by it at the expense of those who do not. The Government not only robs capitalist Peter to pay capitalist Paul, but robs both of more than it pays to Paul; yet though Peter and Paul taken together are poorer, Paul taken by himself is richer, and therefore supports the

Government in the arrangement, whilst Peter complains that the burden of taxation is intolerable.

To illustrate, my wife and I are capitalists, but I hold some War Loan stock, whilst all her money is in bank, railway, and other stocks. We are both taxed equally to pay me the interest on my War Loan; but as the Government pays me that interest and does not pay her anything, I gain by the transaction at her expense; so that if we were not, as it happens, on the communal footing of man and wife, we should never agree about it. Most capitalists do not understand the deal, and are in effect humbugged by it; but those who do understand it will never be unanimous in resisting it; consequently it is voteproof at the parliamentary elections.

This quaint state of things enables the Labor Party to demonstrate that it would pay the propertied class, as a whole, to cancel the National Debt, and put an end to the absurdity of a nation complaining that it is staggering under an intolerable burden of debt when as a matter of fact it owes most of the money to itself. The cancellation of the debt (except the fraction due to foreigners) would be simply a redistribution of income between its citizens without costing the nation, as a whole, a single farthing.

The plan of raising public money by borrowing money from capitalists instead of confiscating it by direct taxation is called funding; and lending money to the Government used to be called putting it in the Funds. And as the terms of the borrowing are that the lender is to have an income for nothing by waiting until his money is repaid, we get the queer phenomenon of lenders who, instead of being anxious to get their money back, dread nothing more; so that the Government, in order to get the loans, has actually to promise that it will not pay back the loan before a certain date, the further off the better. According to Capitalist morality people who live on their capital instead of on interest (as the payment for waiting is called) are spendthrifts and wasters. The capitalist must never consume his spare subsistence himself even when it is of a kind that will keep until he is hungry again. He must use it to purchase an income; and if the purchaser stops paying the income and repays the sum lent him, the lender must not spend that sum, but must immediately buy another income with it, or, as we say, invest it.

This is not merely a matter of prudence: it is a matter of necessity; for as investing capital means lending it to be consumed before it rots, it can never really be restored to the investor. Investing it means, as we have seen, allowing a body of workmen to eat it up

whilst they are engaged in preparing some income producing concern like a railway or factory; and when it is once consumed no mortal power can bring it back into existence. If you do a man or a company or a Government the good turn of letting them use up what you can spare this year, he or she or they may do you the good turn of letting you have an equivalent if they can spare it twenty years hence, and pay you for waiting meanwhile; but they cannot restore what you actually lend them.

The war applied our spare money, not to a producing concern but to a destroying one. In the books of the Bank of England are written the names of a number of persons as the owners of capital to the value of 7000 million pounds. They are said in common speech to be "worth 7000 millions". Now they are in fact "worth" nothing at all. Their 7000 millions have long since been eaten, drunk, worn out, or blown to smithereens, along with much other valuable property and precious lives, on battle-fields all over the world. We are therefore in the ridiculous position of pretending that our country is enriched by property to the value of 7000 millions, when as a matter of fact it is impoverished by having to find 350 fresh millions a year for people who are not doing a stroke of work for her in return: that is, who are consuming a huge mass of wealth without producing any. It is as if a bankrupt, asked if he has any assets, should reply proudly, "Oh no: I have made ducks and drakes of all my assets; but then I have a tremendous lot of debts". The 7000 millions of capital standing in the names of the stockholders in the Bank of England is not wealth, it is debt. If we flatly repudiated it, the nation would be richer not only by 350 millions a year, but by the work the stockholders would have to do to support themselves when their incomes were cut off. The objection to repudiating it is not that it would make the nation poorer, but that repudiation would seem a breach of contract after which nobody would ever lend money to the Government again. Besides, the United States, which lent us a thousand millions of it, might distrain on us for that amount by force of arms. Therefore we protest that nothing would induce us to commit such an act of cynical dishonesty. But that does not prevent us, as far as the debt is due to our own capitalists, from paying them honestly with one hand, and forcibly taking back the money plus seventeen per cent interest with the other.

By the way, lest somebody should come along and assure you that these figures are inaccurate, and that I am not to be trusted, I had better warn you that the figures are in round numbers; that

they vary from year to year through paying off and fluctuation of values; that the thousand millions borrowed from America were lent by us to allies of whom some cannot afford to pay us at all, and others, who can, are trying how little we can be induced to take; that the rest of the money was raised through the banks in such a way that indignant statisticians have proved that we accepted indebtedness for nearly twice what we actually spent; that the rise in the market price of hiring spare money must have enriched the capitalists more than the war taxation impoverished them: in short, that the simplicity of the case can be addled by a hundred inessential circumstances when the object is to addle and not to elucidate. My object being elucidatory, I have left them all out, as I want to shew you the nest, not the hedge.

The point is that the war has produced an enormous consumption of capital; and instead of this consumption leaving behind it an addition to our industrial plant and means of communication and other contrivances for increasing our output of wealth, it has effected a wholesale destruction of such things, leaving the world with less income to distribute than before. The fact that it has swept away three empires, and substituted republicanism for monarchy as the prevalent form of government in Europe, thus bringing Europe into line with America as a republican continent, may seem to you to be worth the money; or, as this is not in the least what was intended by the British or any other of the belligerent Powers, it may seem to you a scandalous disaster. But that is a matter of sentiment, not of economics. Whether you regard the political result with satisfaction or dismay, the cost of the war remains the same, and so does the effect of our way of paying it on the distribution of our national income. We are all heavily taxed to enable that section of the capitalist class which invested in War Loan for five per cent interest (a high rate considering the security), to draw henceforth a million a day from the fruits of our daily labor without contributing to them. True, we take that much, and more, back from the whole capitalist class by taxation; so that what really happens is a redistribution of income among the capitalists, leaving the proletariat rather better off than worse, though unfortunately it is not the sort of redistribution that makes for equality of income or discredit of idleness. But it illustrates the point of this chapter, which is that a virtual confiscation of capital to the amount of thousands of millions proved perfectly feasible when the Government had employment in the shape of national service, even in work of destruction, instantly ready for an unlimited number of



proletarians, male and female. Those had been halcyon days but for the bloodshed.

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## NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION LEVIES

ALTHOUGH the taxation of capital is nonsensical, it does not follow that every proposal presented to you in that form must necessarily be impracticable. It is true that the Government, if it wants ready money, can obtain it only by confiscating income; but this does not rule out operations for which no ready money is required, nor does it prevent the Government from taking not only the income of a proprietor, but the source of his income: that is, his property, as well. To take a possibility that is quite likely to become a fact in your experience, suppose the Government were driven to the conclusion that the National Debt, or some part of it, must be wiped out, either because the taxation needed to pay the interest of it is hampering capitalist enterprise, which would be a Conservative Government's reason, or for the sake of redistributing income more equally, which would be a Socialist Government's reason! To pay off what we have borrowed from America, or from foreigners of any nationality, would need ready money; and therefore the simple wiping out of this part of the national debt would be impossible except by flat repudiation, which would destroy our credit abroad and probably involve us in a war of distraint. But that part of the debt which we owe to ourselves could be wiped out without a farthing of ready money by a tax presented and assessed as a tax on capital, or rather a levy on capital (to indicate that it was not to be an annual tax but only a once-in-a-way tax). Take the war debt as an illustration of the possibility of a total wipe-out. Let us suppose for the sake of simplicity that as much of the National Debt as the Government owes to its own subjects is £100, all lent to it by one woman (call her Mary Anne) for the war, and, of course, long since spent and blown to bits, leaving nothing behind but the obligation of the Government to pay Mary Anne £5 a year out of the taxes. Imagine also that there is only one other capitalist in the country (say Sarah Jane), whose property consists of £100 from stocks and land yielding an income of £5 a year. That is, Sarah Jane owns the entire industrial plant of the country; and Mary Anne is the sole domestic (as distinguished from foreign) national creditor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer brings in a tax of 100 per cent on capital, and demands £100 from Sarah Jane and £100 from Mary Anne. Neither of them can pay £100 ready money out of their £5; but Sarah Jane can hand over all

her share certificates to the Government; and the Government can transfer Mary Anne's War Loan of £100 to itself. Mary and Sarah, left destitute, will have to work for their livings; and all the industrial plant of the country will have passed into the hands of the Government: that is, been nationalized.

In this transaction there is no physical impossibility, no selling of worthless shares for non-existent ready money, no rocketing of the Bank Rate, nothing but simple expropriation. The fact that the £200 at stake are really thousands of millions, and that there are many Marys and many Sarahs, each with her complement of Tonis and Dicks, alters the size of the transaction, but not its balance. The thing could be done. Further, if the disturbance created by a sudden and total expropriation would be too great, it could be done in instalments of any desired magnitude. The 100 per cent tax on capital could be 50 per cent or 5 per cent or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent every ten years or what you please. If 100 per cent meant a catastrophe (as it would) and 10 per cent only a squeeze, then the Government could content itself with the squeeze.

By such a levy the Government could take off the taxation it had formerly imposed to pay the home War Loan interest, and use the dividends of the confiscated shares to pay the interest on our war debt to America, taking off also the taxation that now pays that interest. If it were a Conservative Government it would take it off in the form of a reduction of income tax, supertax, excess profits tax (if any), death duties, and other taxes on property and big business. A Labor Government would leave these taxes untouched, and take taxes off food, or increase its contributions to the unemployed fund, its grants-in-aid to the municipalities for public work, or anything else that would benefit the proletariat and make for equality of income. Thus the levy could be manipulated to make the rich richer as easily as to raise the general level of well-being; and this is why it is just as likely to be done by a Capitalist as by a Labor Government until the domestic war debt is—shall we say liquidated, as repudiated sounds so badly?

The special objection to such practicable levies is that they are raids on private property rather than orderly and gradual conversions of it into public property. The objection to raids is that they destroy the sense of security which induces the possessors of spare money to invest it instead of spending it. Insecurity discourages saving among those who can afford to save, and encourages reckless expenditure. If you have a thousand pounds to spare, and have not the slightest doubt that by investing it you can secure a future

income of £50 a year, subject only to income tax, you will invest it. If you are led to think it just as likely as not that if you invest it the Government will presently take it or some considerable part of it from you under pretext of a Debt Redemption Levy, you will probably conclude that you may as well spend it while you are sure of it. It would be much better for the country and for yourself if you could feel sure that if the Government took your property it would buy it from you at full market price, or, if that were for any reason impracticable, compensate you fully for it. It is true that, as we found when we went into the question of compensation, this apparently conservative way of doing it is really as expropriative as the direct levy, because the Government raises the purchase money or compensation by taxing property; so that the proprietors buy each other out and are not as a body compensated at all; but the sense of insecurity created by the raiding method is demoralizing, as you will understand if you read the description by Thucydides of the plague at Athens, which applies to all plagues, pathological or financial. Plagues destroy the sense of security of life: people come to feel that they will probably be dead by the end of the week, and throw their characters away for a day's pleasure just as capitalists throw their money away when it is no longer safe. A raid on property, as distinguished from a regular annual income tax, is like a plague in this respect. Also it forms a bad precedent and sets up a raiding habit. Thus domestic debt redemption levies, though physically practicable, are highly injudicious.

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## THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROBLEM SOLVED

YOU may now stop for breath, as you are at last in possession not only of the object of Socialism, which is simply equality of income, but of the methods by which it can be attained. You know why coal mining and banking should be nationalized, and how the expropriation of the coalowners and bankers can be compensated so as to avoid injustice to individuals or any shock to the sense of security which is necessary to prevent the continued investment of spare money as capital. Now when you have the formula for these two nationalizations, one of a material industry involving much heavy manual work, and the other a service conducted by sedentary brain work, you have a formula for all nationalizations. And when you have the formula for the constitutional compensated expropriation of the coalowners and bankers by taxation you have the formula for the expropriation of all proprietors. Knowing how

to nationalize industry you know how to place the Government in control of the distribution of the income produced by industry. We have not only found these formulas, but seen them tested in practice in our existing institutions sufficiently to have no more doubt that they would work than we have that next year's budget will work. Therefore we need no longer be worried by demands for what people call a constructive program. There it is for them; and what will surprise them most about it is that it does not contain a single novelty. The difficulties and the novelty are not, as they imagine, in the practical part of the business, which turns out to be quite plain sailing, but in the metaphysical part: that is, in the will to equality. We know how to take the distribution of the national income out of the hands of the private owners of property and place it under the control of the Government. But the Government can distribute it unequally if it decides to do so. Instead of destroying the existing inequality it can intensify it. It can maintain a privileged class of idlers with huge incomes, and give them State security for the continuance of those incomes.

It is this possibility that may enlist and to a certain extent has already enlisted the most determined opponents of Socialism on the side of nationalization, expropriative taxation, and all the constructive political machinery of Socialism, as a means of redistributing income, the catch in it being that the redistribution at which they aim is not an equal distribution, but a State-guaranteed unequal one. John Bunyan, with his queer but deep insight, pointed out long ago that there is a way to hell even from the gates of heaven; that the way to heaven is therefore also the way to hell; and that the name of the gentleman who goes to hell by that road is Ignorance. The way to Socialism, ignorantly pursued, may land us in State Capitalism. Both must travel the same road; and this is what Lenin, less inspired than Bunyan, failed to see when he denounced the Fabian methods as State Capitalism. What is more, State Capitalism, plus Capitalist Dictatorship (Fascism), will compete for approval by cleaning up some of the dirtiest of our present conditions: raising wages; reducing death rates; opening the career to the talents; and ruthlessly cashiering inefficiency, before in the long run succumbing to the bane of inequality, against which no civilization can finally stand out.

This is why, though you are now equipped with a complete answer to those who very properly demand from Socialists constructive plans, practical programs, a constitutional parliamentary routine, and so forth, you are still not within eight score pages of

the end of this book. We have still to discuss not only the pseudo-Socialism against which I have just warned you, but other things which I cannot omit without leaving you more or less defenceless against the alarmist who, instead of being sensibly anxious about constructive methods, is quite convinced that the world can be turned upside down in a day by an unwashed Russian in a red tie and an uncombed woman with a can of petrol if only they are wicked enough. These poor scared things will ask you what about revolution? what about marriage? what about children? what about sex? when, as they assume, Socialism will have upset all our institutions and substituted for our present population of sheep a raving pack of mad dogs. No doubt you can tell them to go away, or to talk about such matters as they are capable of understanding; but you will find that they are only the extreme instances of a state of mind that is very common. Not only will plenty of your most sensible friends want to discuss these subjects in connection with Socialism, but you yourself will be as keen about them as they. So now that we know exactly what Socialism aims at and how it can be done, let us leave all that as settled, and equip ourselves for general conversation on or around the subject.

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## SIAM SOCIALISM

THE example of the war shews how easy it is for a government to confiscate the incomes of one set of citizens, and hand them over to another without any intention of equalizing distribution or effecting any nationalization of industries or services. If any class or trade or clique can obtain control of Parliament, it can use its power to plunder any other class or trade or clique, to say nothing of the nation as a whole, for its own benefit. Such operations are of course always disguised as reforms of one kind or another, or as political necessities; but they are really intrigues to use the State for selfish ends. They are not on that account to be opposed as pernicious: rogues with axes to grind must use popular reforms as bait to catch votes for Acts of Parliament in which they have some personal interest. Besides, all reforms are lucrative to somebody. For instance, the landlords of a city may be the warmest supporters of street improvements, and of every public project for making the city more attractive to residents and tourists, because they hope to reap the whole money value of the improvements in raised rents. When a public park is opened, the rents of all the houses looking on that park go up. When some would-be public benefactor

endows a great public school for the purpose of making education cheap, he unintentionally makes all the private houses within reach of it dear. In the long run the owners of the land take from us as rent in one form or another everything that we can do without. But the improvements are none the less improvements. Nobody would destroy the famous endowed schools of Bedford because rents are higher there than in towns which possess no such exceptional advantage. When Faust asked Mephistopheles what he was, Mephistopheles answered that he was part of a power that was always willing evil and always doing good; and though our landlords and capitalists are certainly not always either willing evil or doing good, yet Capitalism justifies itself and was adopted as an economic principle on the express ground that it provides selfish motives for doing good, and that human beings will do nothing except for selfish motives. Now though the best things have to be done for the greater glory of God, as some of us say, or for the enlargement of life and the bettering of humanity, as others put it, yet it is very true that if you want to get a philanthropic measure enacted by a public body, parliamentary or municipal, you may find it shorter to give the rogues an axe to grind than to stir up the philanthropists to do anything except preach at the rogues. Rogues, by which perhaps rather invidious name I designate persons who will do nothing unless they get something out of it for themselves, are often highly effective persons of action, whilst idealist talkers only sow the wind, leaving the next generation of men of action to reap the whirlwind.

It is already a well-established method of Capitalism to ask the Government to provide for some private enterprise on the ground of its public utility. Some good has been done in this way: for instance, some of our modern garden cities and suburbs could not have been built if the companies that built them had not been enabled, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, to borrow a large share of their capital from the Government on the understanding that the shareholders were poor people holding no more than £200 capital apiece. But this limitation is quite illusory, because, though the companies may not issue more than £200 in shares to any individual, they may and do borrow unlimited sums by creating what is called Loan Stock; and the very same person who is not allowed to have more than £200 in shares may have two hundred millions in Loan Stock if the company can use them. Consequently these garden cities, which are most commendable enterprises in their way, are nevertheless the property of rich

capitalists. As I hold a good deal of stock in them myself I am tempted to claim that their owners are specially philanthropic and public-spirited men, who have voluntarily invested their capital where it will do the most good and not where it will make the most profit for them; but they are not immortal; and we have no guarantee that their heirs will inherit their disinterestedness. Meanwhile the fact remains that they have built up their property largely with public money: that is, by money raised by taxing the rest of the community, and that this does not make the nation the owner of the garden city, nor even a shareholder in it. The Government is simply a creditor who will finally be paid off, leaving the cities in the hands of their capitalist proprietors. The tenants, though led to expect a share in the surplus profits of the city, find such profits practically always applied to extending the enterprise for the benefit of fresh investors. The garden cities and suburbs are an enormous improvement on the manufacturing towns produced by unaided private enterprise; but as they do not pay their proprietors any better than slum property, nor indeed as well, it is quite possible that this consideration may induce the future owners to abolish their open spaces and overcrowd them with houses until they are slums. To guarantee the permanence of the improvement it would be safer for the Government to buy out the shareholders than for the shareholders to pay off the Government, though even that would fail if the Government acted on Capitalist principles by selling the cities to the highest bidders.

A more questionable development of this exploitation of the State by Capitalism and Trade Unionism is the subsidy of £10,000,000 paid by the Government to the coal owners in 1925 to avoid a strike. The coal miners said they would not work unless they got such and such wages. The employers vowed they could not afford to keep their mines open unless the men would accept less; and a great press campaign was set up to persuade us that the country was on the verge of ruin through excessive wages when as a matter of fact the country was in a condition that at many earlier periods would have been described as cheerfully prosperous. Finally the Government, to avert a strike which would have paralyzed the main industries of the country, had either to make up out of the taxes the wages offered by the employers to the wages demanded by the men, or else nationalize the mines. Being a Capitalist Government, pledged not to nationalize anything, it chose to make up the wages out of the taxes. When the £10,000,000 was exhausted the trouble began again. The Government refused

to renew the subsidy; the employers refused to go on without it unless the miners worked eight hours a day instead of seven; the miners refused to work more or take less; there was a big strike, in which the workers in several other industries at first took part "sympathetically" until they realized that by using up the funds of the Trade Unions on strike pay they were hindering the miners instead of helping them; and many respectable people were, as usual on such occasions, frightened out of their wits and into the belief that the country was on the verge of revolution. And there was this excuse for them: that under fully developed Capitalism civilization is always on the verge of revolution. We live as in a villa on Vesuvius.

During the strike the taxpayer was no longer exploited by the owners; but the ratepayer was exploited by the workers. A man on strike has no right to outdoor relief; but his wife and children have. Consequently a married miner with two children could depend on receiving a pound a week at the expense of the ratepayers whilst he was refusing to work. This development of parochial Communism really knocks the bottom out of the Capitalist system, which depends on the ruthless compulsion of the proletariat to work on pain of starvation or imprisonment under detestable conditions in the workhouse. Thus you have had the Government first giving outdoor relief (the ten million subsidy) to the owners at the expense of the taxpayers, and then the local authorities giving outdoor relief to the proletariat at the expense of the ratepayers, the Government being manned mostly by capitalists and the local authorities by proletarians.

It was in the proletarian quarters of London, notably in Poplar, that the Poor Law Guardians first claimed the right to give outdoor relief at full subsistence rates to all unemployed persons, thereby freeing their proletarian constituents from "the lash of starvation", and enabling them to hold out for the highest wages their trades could afford. The mining districts followed suit during the coal strike of 1926. This right was contested by the Government, which tried to supplant the parochial authorities by the central Ministry of Health. The Ministry, through the auditors of public accounts, surcharged the Guardians with the part of the outdoor relief which they considered excessive; but as the Guardians could not have paid the surcharge even if the proceedings taken against them had not failed, the Government took the administration of the Poor Law into its own hands, and passed Acts to confirm its powers to do so. This was essentially an attempt by the Capitalist central



Government to recover the weapon of starvation which the proletarian local authorities had taken out of the owners' hands. But the day had gone by for the ultra-capitalist relief rules of the nineteenth century, when, as I well recollect, the Registrar-General's returns of the causes of the deaths during the year always included starvation as a matter of course. The lowest scale of relief which the Government ventured to propose would have seemed ruinously extravagant and demoralizing to the Gradgrinds and Bounderbys denounced by Dickens in 1854.

As to the demoralization, they would not have been very far wrong. If mine-owners, or any other sort of owners, find that when they get into difficulties through being lazy, or ignorant, or too grasping, or behind the times, or all four, they can induce the Government to confiscate the taxpayers' incomes for subsidies to get them out of their difficulties, they will go from bad to worse. If miners, or any other sort of workers, find that the local authorities will confiscate the incomes of the ratepayers to feed them when they are idle, their incentive to pay their way by their labor will be, to say the least, perceptibly slackened. Yet it is no use simply refusing to make these confiscations. If the nation will not take its industries out of the hands of private owners it must enable them to carry them on, whether they can make them pay or not. If the owners will not pay subsistence wages the nation must; for it cannot afford to have its children undernourished and its civil and military strength weakened, though it was fool enough to think it could in Queen Victoria's time. Subsidies and doles are demoralizing, both for employers and proletarians; but they stave off Socialism, which people seem to consider worse than pauperized insolvency, Heaven knows why!

Still, governments need not be so shamelessly unbusinesslike as they are when subsidies are in question. The subsidizing habit was acquired by the British Government during the war, when certain firms had to be kept going at all costs, profit or no profit, because their activities were indispensable. It was against all Capitalist principles; but in war economic principles are thrown to the wind like Christian principles; and the habits of war are not cured instantly by armistices. In 1925, when the Government was easily blackmailed into paying the mine-owners ten millions of the money of the general taxpayer (your money and mine), it might at least have secured for us an equivalent interest in the mines. It might have obliged the owners to mortgage their property to the nation for the means to carry on, as they would have had to do if they had

raised the money in the ordinary commercial way. As to the miners, they felt no responsibility, because, as the owners bought labor in the market exactly as they bought pit props, there was no more excuse for asking the miners to admit indebtedness for the subsidy than the dealers in pit props. On every principle of Capitalism the Government should either have refused to interfere, and have let the comparatively barren mines which could not afford to pay the standard wage for the standard working day go smash, or else it should have advanced the millions by way of mortgage, not on the worthless security of the defaulting mines, but on that of all the coal mines, good and bad. The interest on the mortgage would in that case have been paid to the nation by the good mines, which would thus have been compelled to make up the deficits of the bad ones; and if the interest had not been paid, the Government could finally have nationalized the mines by simple foreclosure instead of by purchase.

But capitalists are by no means in favor of having Capitalist principles applied to themselves in their dealings with the State. Besides, why should the fortunate owners of solvent mines subsidize the owners of insolvent ones? If the Government chooses to subsidize bad mines, let it be content with the security of the bad mines. It ended in the Government making the owners a present of the ten millions. The owners had to pass it on to the miners as wages: at least that was the idea; and it was more or less the fact also. But whether we regard it as a subsidy to the miners or to the owners or to both, it was none the less confiscated from the general taxpayer and handed as alms to favored persons.

The people who say that such subsidies are Socialistic, whether with the object of discrediting them or recommending them, are talking nonsense: they might as well say that the perpetual pensions conferred by Charles II on his illegitimate children were Socialistic. They are frank exploitations of the taxpayer by bankrupt Capitalism and its proletarian dependents. Socialist agitators, far from supporting such subsidies, will shout at you that you are paying part of the men's wages whilst the mine-owners take all the profits; that if you will stand that, you will stand anything; that you are paying for nationalization and not getting it; that you are being saddled with a gigantic system of outdoor relief to the rich in addition to their rents, their dividends, and the doles they have left you to pay to their discarded employees; that the capitalists, having plundered everything else, land, capital, and labor, are now plundering the Treasury; that, not content with overcharging

you for every article you buy, they are now taxing you through the Government collector; and that as they will have to hand over a share of what they take from you in this way as wages, the Trade Unions are taking good care to make the Labor Party support the subsidies in Parliament.

Meanwhile you hear from all quarters angry denunciations of Poplarism as a means by which the rate collector robs you of your possibly hardearned money, often to the tune of twentyfour shillings for every pound of the value of your house, to keep idle ablebodied laborers eating their heads off at a higher rate of expenditure than you, perhaps, can afford in your own house.

All this, with due allowance for platform rhetoric, is true. The attempt to maintain a failing system by subsidies plus Poplarism burns the candle at both ends, and makes straight for industrial bankruptcy. But you will not, if you are wise, waste your forces in resentful indignation. The capitalists are not making a conscious attempt to rob you. They are the flies on the wheel of their own system, which they understand as little as you did before we sat down to study it. All they know is that Trade Unionism is playing their own game against them with such success that more and more of the overcharges (to you) that formerly went to profit are now going to wages. They cry to the Government to save them, and it saves them (at your expense) partly because it is afraid of a big strike; partly because it wants to put off the alternative of nationalization as long as possible; partly because it has to consider the proletarian vote at the next general election; and mostly because it can think of nothing better to do in the rare moments when it has time to think at all. The British employers, the British Trade Unionists, and the British Government have no deep designs: so far it is just hand to mouth with them; and you need not waste any moral indignation on them. But please note the word British, thrice repeated in the last sentence, and also the words "so far". The American employers and financiers are far more self-conscious than our business men and working men are; and the Americans are teaching our people their methods. Modern scientific discoveries have set them dreaming of enormously increased production, and they have found out that as the world depends on the people who work, whether with head or hand, they can by combining prevent idle and incapable owners of land and capital from getting too much of the increase. They know that they can neither realize their dream nor combine properly by using their own brains; and they are now paying large salaries to clever persons whose sole

business is to think for them. Suppose you were the managing head of a big business, and that you were determined not to tolerate Trade Unionism among your workpeople, and therefore had to treat them well enough to prevent them feeling the want of a union. In England your firm would be called "a rat house", in America simply a non-union house. Imagine yourself visited by a well-dressed lady or gentleman with the pleasant nonchalance of a person of proved and conscious ability and distinction. She (we will assume that she is a lady) has called to suggest that you should order all your workpeople to join the union of their trade, of which she is the pampered representative. You gasp, and would order her out if you dared, but how can one shew the door to a superior and perfectly self-confident person. She proceeds to explain whilst you are staring at her. She says it will be worth your while: that her union is prepared to put some new capital into your business, and that it will come to a friendly arrangement with you as to the various trade restrictions to which you so much object. She points out that if instead of working to increase the dividends of your idle shareholders you were just to give them what they are accustomed to expect, and use the rest of the profit for bettering the condition of the people who are doing the work (including yourself), the business would receive a fresh impulse, and you and all the really effective people in it make much more money. She suggests ways of doing it that you have never dreamt of. Can you see any reason except stupid conservatism for refusing such a proposal?

This is not a fancy picture. It has actually occurred in America as the result of the Trade Unions employing first-rate business brains to think for them, and not grudging them salaries equal to the wages of a dozen workmen. When English Trade Unions become Americanized as English big business is becoming Americanized they will do the same. Our big businesses are already picking out brainy champions from the universities and the public services to do just such jobs for them. Both big business and skilled labor will presently be managing their affairs scientifically, instead of dragging heavily and unimaginatively through the old ruts. And when this is accomplished they will enslave the unskilled, unorganized proletariat, including, as we have seen, the middle-class folk who have no aptitude for money making. They will enslave the Government. And they will do it mostly by the methods of Socialism, effecting such manifest improvements in the condition of the masses that it will be inhuman to stop them. The organized workers will live, not in slums, but in places like Port Sunlight,

Bournville, and the Garden Cities. Employers like Mr Ford, Lord Leverhulme and Mr Cadbury will be the rule and not the exception; and the sense of helpless dependence on them will grow at the expense of individual adventurousness. The old communal cry of high rates and a healthy city will be replaced by Mr Ford's cry of high wages and colossal profits.

Those profits are the snag in the stream of prosperity. If they are unequally distributed they will wreck the system that has produced them, and involve the nation in the catastrophe. In spite of all the apparent triumphs of increased business efficiency the Socialists will still have to insist on public control of distribution and equalization of income. Without that, capitalist big business, in league with the aristocracy of Trade Unionism, will control the Government for its private ends; and you may find it very difficult, as a voter, to distinguish between the genuine Socialism that changes private into public ownership of our industries, and the sham Socialism that confiscates the money of one set of citizens without compensation only to hand it over to another set, not to make our incomes more equal, but to give more to those who have already too much.

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## CAPITALISM IN PERPETUAL MOTION

AND now, learned lady reader (for by this time you know much more about the vital history and present social problems of your country and of the world than an average Capitalist Prime Minister), do you notice that in these ceaseless activities which keep all of us fed and clothed and lodged, and some of us even pampered, NOTHING STAYS PUT? Human society is like a glacier: it looks like an immovable and eternal field of ice; but it is really flowing like a river; and the only effect of its glassy rigidity is that its own unceasing movement splits it up into crevasses that make it frightfully dangerous to walk on, all the more as they are beautifully concealed by natural whitewash in the shape of snow. Your father's bankruptcy, your husband's, or your own may precipitate you at any moment into a little crevasse. A big one may suddenly swallow a whole empire, as three of them were swallowed in 1918. If, as is most likely, you have been brought up to believe that the world is a place of permanent governments, settled institutions, and unchangeable creeds in which all respectable people believe, to which they all conform, and which are unalterable because they are founded for all eternity on Magna Carta, the Habeas Corpus Act, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, what you

have gathered here of the continual and unexpected changes and topsy-turvy developments of our social order, the passing of power from one class to another, the changes of opinion by which what was applauded as prosperity and honor and piety at the beginning of the nineteenth century came to be execrated as greedy villainy at the end of it, and what were prosecuted as criminal conspiracies under George IV are legalized and privileged combinations, powerful in Parliament, under George V, may have driven you to ask, what is the use of your drudging through all these descriptions and explanations if by the time you have reached the end of the book everything will have changed? I can only assure you that the way to understand the changes that are going on is to understand the changes that have gone before, and warn you that many women have spoilt their whole lives and misled their children disastrously by not understanding them.

Besides, the things I have been describing have not passed wholly away. There are still old-fashioned noblemen who lord it over the countryside as their ancestors have done for hundreds of years, sometimes benevolently, sometimes driving the inhabitants out to make room for sheep or deer at their pleasure. There are still farmers, large and small. There are still many petty employers carrying on small businesses singly or in firms of two or three partners. There are still joint stock companies that have not been merged in Trusts. There are still multitudes of employees who belong to no Trade Union, and are as badly sweated as the woman who sat in unwomanly rags and sang the Song of the Shirt. There are still children and young persons who are cruelly over-worked in spite of the Acts of Parliament that reach only the factories and workshops. The world at large, though it contains London and Paris and New York, also contains primitive villages where gas, electric light, tap water and main drainage are as unknown as they were to King Alfred. Our famous universities and libraries and picture galleries are within travelling distance of tribes of savages and cannibals, and of barbarian empires. Thus you can see around you living examples of all the stages of the Capitalist System I have described. Indeed, if you come, or your parents came (like mine) from one of those families of more than a dozen children in the genteel younger-son class which were more common formerly than they are today, you are certain to have found, without going further than your parents, your brothers and sisters, your uncles and aunts, your first cousins, and perhaps yourself, examples of every phase of the conditions produced by Capitalism in that class during the

last two centuries, to say nothing of the earlier half medieval phases in which most women, especially respectable women, are still belated.

Beside the Changing and the Changed stand the Not Yet Changed; and we have to deal with all three in our daily business. Until we know what has happened to the Changed we shall not understand what is going to happen to the Not Yet Changed, and may ourselves, with the best intentions, effect mischievous changes, or oppose and wreck beneficial ones. If we look for guidance to the articles in our party newspapers (all living on profiteers' advertisements) or the speeches of party politicians, or the gossip of our politically ignorant and class-prejudiced neighbors and relatives, which is unfortunately just what most of us do, we are sure to be either misguided and corrupted or exasperated.

Take, as a warning, those adventures of Capitalism in pursuit of profits which I sketched for you in Chapter 37 and the few following ones. They are always described to you in books and newspapers as the history of the British race, or (in France) the French nation, or (in Germany or Italy) the grand old German or Latin stock, dauntlessly exercising its splendid virtues and talents in advancing civilization at home and establishing it among the heathen abroad. Capitalism can be made to look very well on paper. But beware of allowing your disillusion to disable you by plunging you into disgust and general cynical incredulity. Our thrilling columns of national self-praise and mutual admiration must not be dismissed as mere humbug. Without great discoverers and inventors and explorers, great organizers and engineers and soldiers, hardy and reckless sailors, great chemists and mathematicians, devoted missionaries and desperate adventurers, our capitalists would be no better off today than they would have remained in Greenland or Thibet. But the extraordinary men whose exploits have made the capitalists rich were not themselves capitalists. The best of them received little or no encouragement from capitalists, because there was seldom any prospect of immediate profit from their labors and adventures. Many of them were and are not only poor but persecuted. And when the time comes, mostly after their deaths, to bring their discoveries and conquests into everyday use, the work is done by the hungry ones: the capitalists providing only the spare food they have neither sown nor reaped, baked nor brewed, but only collected from the hungry as rent or interest, and appropriated under laws made by capitalist legislators for that purpose. British brains, British genius, British courage and resolution have made

the great reputation of Britain, as the same qualities in other nations have made the other great national reputations; but the capitalists as such have provided neither brains, genius, courage, nor resolution. Their contribution has been the spare food on which the geniuses have lived; and this the capitalists did not produce: they only intercepted it during its transfer from the hungry ones who made it to the hungry ones who consumed it.

Note that I say the capitalists *as such*; for the accident of a person being both a capitalist and a genius may happen just as easily as the accident of being both a genius and a pauper. Nature takes no notice of money. It is not likely that a born capitalist (that is, the inheritor of a fortune) will be a genius, because it is not likely that anybody will be born a genius, the phenomenon being naturally rare; but it may happen to capitalists occasionally, just as it has happened to princes. Queen Elizabeth was able to tell her ministers that if they put her into the street without anything but her petticoat she could make her living with the best of them. At the same time Queen Mary of Scotland was proving that if she had been put into the street with a hundred millions of money and an army of fifty thousand men she would have made a mess of it all somehow and come to a bad end. But their being queens had nothing to do with that: it was their personal quality as women that made the difference. In the same way, when one born capitalist happens to be a genius and another a waster, the capital produces neither the ability nor the worthlessness. Take away their capital, and they remain just the same. double it, and you double neither their ability nor their imbecility. The stupidest person in the country may be the richest: the cleverest and greatest may not know where tomorrow's dinner is to come from. I repeat, capitalists as such need no special ability, and lose nothing by the lack of it. If they seem able to feed Peter the Laborer it is only because they have taken the food from Paul the Farmer, and even this they have not done with their own hands: they have paid Matthew the Agent to do it, and had his salary from Mark the Shopkeeper. And when Peter is a navvy, Paul an engineer, Matthew the manager of a Trust, and Mark a banker, the situation remains essentially unchanged. Peter and Paul, Matthew and Mark, do all the work: the capitalist does nothing but take as much of what they make as she can without starving them (killing the goose that lays the golden eggs).

Therefore you may disregard both the Capitalist papers which claim all the glories of our history as the fruit of Capitalist virtue



and talent, and the anti-Capitalist papers which ascribe all our history's shames and disgraces to the greed of the capitalists. Waste neither your admiration nor your indignation. The more you understand the system, the better you will see that the most devout personal righteousness cannot evade it except by political changes which will rescue the whole nation from it.

But though the capitalist as such does nothing but invest her money, Capitalism does a great deal. When it has filled the home markets with all the common goods the people can afford to pay for out of their wages, and all the established fashionable luxuries the rich will buy, it must apply its fresh accumulations of spare money to more out-of-the-way and hazardous enterprises. It is then that Capitalism becomes adventurous and experimental; listens to the schemes of hungry men who are great inventors or chemists or engineers; and establishes new industries and services like telephones, motor charabancs, air services, wireless concerts, and so forth. It is then that it begins to consider the question of harbors, which, as we saw, it would not look at whilst there was still room for new distilleries. At the present moment an English company has undertaken to build a harbor at a cost of a million pounds for a Portuguese island in the Atlantic, and even to make it a free port (that is, charge no harbour dues) if the Government of the island lets it collect and keep the customs duties.

The capitalists, though they are very angry when the hungry ask for Government help of any kind, have no scruples about asking it for themselves. The railways ask the Government to guarantee their dividends; the air services ask for large sums from the Government to help them to maintain their aeroplanes and make money out of them; the coalowners and the miners between them extort subsidies from the Government by threatening a strike if they do not get it; and the Government, under the Trades Facilities Acts, guarantees loans to private capitalists without securing any share in their enterprises for the nation, which provides them with capital cheaply, but has to pay profiteering prices for their goods and services all the same. In the end there is hardly any conceivable enterprise that can be made to pay dividends that Capitalism will not undertake as long as it can find spare money; and when it cannot it is quite ready to extract money from the Government—that is, to take it forcibly from the people by taxes—by assuring everyone that the Government can do nothing itself for the people, who must always come to the capitalists to get it done for them in return for substantial profits, dividends, and rents. Its operations are so

enormous that it alters the size and meaning of what we call our country. Trading companies of capitalists have induced the Government to give them charters under which they have seized large and populous islands like Borneo, whole empires like India, and great tracts of country like Rhodesia, governing them and maintaining armies in them for the purpose of making as much money out of them as possible. But they have taken care to hoist the British flag, and make use, directly or indirectly, of the British army and navy at the cost of the British taxpayers to defend these conquests of theirs; and in the end the British Commonwealth has had to take over their responsibilities and add the islands and countries they have seized to what is called the British Empire, with the curious result, quite unintended by the British people, that the centre of the British Empire is now in the East instead of in Great Britain, and out of every hundred of our fellow subjects only eleven are whites, or even Christians. Thus Capitalism leads us into enterprises of all sorts, at home and abroad, over which we have no control, and for which we have no desire. The enterprises are not necessarily bad: some of them have turned out well; but the point is that Capitalism does not care whether they turn out well or ill for us provided they promise to bring in money to the shareholders. We never know what Capitalism will be up to next; and we never can believe a word its newspapers tell us about its doings when the truth seems likely to be unpopular.

It is hard to believe that you may wake up one morning, and learn from your newspaper that the Houses of Parliament and the King have moved to Constantinople or Baghdad or Zanzibar, and that this insignificant island is to be retained only as a meteorological station, a bird sanctuary, and a place of pilgrimage for American tourists. But if that did happen, what could you do? It would be a perfectly logical development of Capitalism. And it is no more impossible than the transfer of the mighty Roman empire from Rome to Constantinople was impossible. All you could do, if you wished to be in the fashion, or if your business or that of your husband could be conducted only in a great metropolitan centre, would be to go east after the King and Parliament, or west to America and cease to be a Briton.

You need not, however, pack up just yet. But what you really need do is rid your mind of the notion that mere Conservatism, in its general sense of a love for the old ways and institutions you were brought up with, will be of any avail against Capitalism. Capitalism, in its ceaseless search for investment, its absolute

necessity for finding hungry men to eat its spare bread before it goes stale, breaks through every barrier, rushes every frontier, swallows every religion, levels every institution that obstructs it and sets up any code of morals that facilitates it, as soullessly as it sets up banks and lays cables. And you must approve and conform, or be ruined, and perhaps imprisoned or executed.

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## THE RUNAWAY CAR OF CAPITALISM

CAPITALISM, then, keeps us in perpetual motion. Now motion is not a bad thing: it is life as opposed to stagnation, paralysis, and death. It is novelty as opposed to monotony; and novelty is so necessary to us that if you take the best thing within your reach (say the best food, the best music, the best book, the best state of mind, or the best anything that remains the same always), and if you stick to it long enough you will come to loathe it. Changeable women, for instance, are more endurable than monotonous ones, however unpleasant some of their changes may be: they are sometimes murdered but seldom deserted; and it is the ups and downs of married life that make it bearable. When people shake their heads because we are living in a restless age, ask them how they would like to live in a stationary one and do without change. Nobody who buys a motor car says "the slower the better". Motion is delightful when we can control it guide it, and stop it when it is taking us into danger.

Uncontrolled motion is terrible. Fancy yourself in a car which you do not know how to steer and cannot stop, with an inexhaustible supply of petrol in the tank, rushing along at fifty miles an hour on an island strewn with rocks and bounded by cliff precipices! That is what living under Capitalism feels like when you come to understand it. Capital is running away with us; and we know that it has always ended in the past by taking its passengers over the brink of the precipice at the foot of which are strewn the ruins of empires. The desperately pressing present problem for all governments is how to get control of this motion; make safe highways for it: and steer it along those highways. If only we could stop it whilst we sit down and think! But no: the car will not stop: on the contrary it goes faster and faster as capital accumulates in greater and greater quantities, and as we multiply our numbers. One statesman after another snatches at the wheel and tries his hand. Kings try their hands: dictators try their hands; democratic prime ministers try their hands; committees and Soviets try their

hands; and we look hopefully to them for a moment, imagining that they have got control because they do it with an air of authority and assure us that it will be all right if only we will sit quiet. But Capital runs away with them all; and we palpitate between relief when our ungovernable vehicle blunders into a happy valley, and despair when we hear the growl of the waves at the foot of the cliffs grow louder and louder instead of dying away in the distance. Blessed then are those who do not know and cannot think: to them life seems a joyride with a few disagreeable incidents that must be put up with. They sometimes make the best rulers, just as the best railway signalman is he who does not feel his responsibility enough to be frightened out of his wits by it. But in the long run civilization depends on our governments gaining an intelligent control of the forces that are running away with Capitalism; and for that an understanding of them is necessary. Mere character and energy, much as we admire them, are positively mischievous without intellect and knowledge.

Our present difficulty is that nobody understands except a few students whose books nobody else reads, or here and there a prophet crying in the wilderness and being either ignored by the press or belittled as a crank. Our rulers are full of the illusions of the money market, counting £5 a year as £100. Our voters have not got even so far as this, because nine out of ten of them, women or men, have no more experience of capital than a sheep has of a woollen mill, though the wool comes off its own back.

But between the government and the governed there is a very important difference. The governments do not know how to govern; but they know that government is necessary, and that it must be paid for. The voters regard government as a tyrannical interference with their personal liberty, and taxation as the plunder of the private citizen by the officials of a tyrannous state. Formerly this did not matter much, because the people had no votes. Queen Elizabeth, for instance, told the common people, and even the jurymen and the Knights of the Shires who formed the Parliament in her time, that affairs of State were not their business, and that it was the grossest presumption on their part to have any opinion of their own on such matters. If they attempted to argue with her she threw them into prison without the smallest hesitation. Yet even she could not extract money enough from them in taxes to follow up her political successes. She could barely hold her own by being quite right about the incompetence of the commoners and knights, and being herself the most competent person of her time.

These two advantages made her independent of the standing armies by which other despots maintained themselves. She could depend on the loyalty of her people because she was able, as we say, to deliver the goods. When her successors attempted to be equally despotic without being able to deliver the goods, one of them was beheaded, and the other driven out of the country. Cromwell rivalled her in ability; but though he was a parliament man, he was finally driven to lay violent hands on parliament, and rule by armed force.

As to the common people, the view that their poverty and political ignorance disqualified them for any share in the government of the country was accepted until within my own lifetime. Within my father's lifetime the view that to give every man a vote (to say nothing of every woman) was ridiculous and, if acted on, dangerous, seemed a matter of course not only to Tories like the old Duke of Wellington, but to extreme revolutionaries like the young poet Shelley. It seems only the other day that Mr Winston Churchill declared that Labor is not fit to govern.

Now you probably agree with Queen Elizabeth, Cromwell, Wellington, Shelley, and Mr Winston Churchill. At all events if you do you are quite right. For although Mr Ramsay MacDonald easily convinced the country that a Labor Government can govern at least as well as either the Liberal or Conservative Governments who have had the support of Mr Churchill, the truth is that none of them can govern: Capitalism runs away with them all. The hopes that we founded on the extension of the franchise, first to working men and finally to women, which means in effect to all adults, have been disappointed as far as controlling Capitalism is concerned, and indeed in most other respects too. The first use the women made of their votes was to hurl Mr MacDonald out of Parliament and vote for hanging the Kaiser and making Germany pay for the war, both of them impossibilities which should not have imposed on even a male voter. They got the vote mainly by the argument that they were as competent politically as the men; and when they got it they at once used it to prove that they were just as incompetent. The only point they scored at the election was that the defeat of Mr MacDonald by their vote in Leicester shewed that they were not, as the silliest of their opponents had alleged, sure to vote for the best-looking man.

What the extension of political power to the whole community (Democracy, as they call it) has produced is a reinforcement of the popular resistance to government and taxation at a moment

when nothing but a great extension of government and taxation can hope to control the Gadarene rush of Capitalism towards the abyss. And this has produced a tendency which is the very last that the old Suffragists and Suffragettes dreamt of, or would have advocated if they had dreamt of it: namely, a demand on the part of the politically conscious and articulate minority (the majority can hardly be said to have any political views at all) for the abandonment of parliamentary government and the substitution of despotic strong men to bring to heel predatory capitalists, inflationist financiers, and corrupt, slack, snobbish bureaucrats. Disilluded democrats clamor for discipline. France supports M. Poincaré: though he has repudiated eighty per cent of her national debt, apparently because he is the most arbitrary available Frenchman. Italy has knocked its parliament down and handed the whip to Signor Mussolini to thrash Italian democracy and bureaucracy into some sort of order and efficiency. In Spain the king and the military commander-in-chief have refused to stand any more democratic nonsense, and taken the law into their own hands. In Russia a minority of devoted Marxists maintain by sheer force such government as is possible in the teeth of an intensely recalcitrant peasantry. In England we should welcome another Cromwell but for two considerations. First, there is no Cromwell. Second, history teaches us that if there were one, and he again ruled us by military force after trying every sort of parliament and finding each worse than the other, he would be worn out or dead after a few years; and then we should return like the sow to her wallowing in the mire and leave the restored profiteers to wreak on the corpse of the worn-out-ruler the spite they dared not express whilst he was alive. Thus our inability to govern ourselves lands us in such a mess that we hand the job over to any person strong enough to undertake it; and then our unwillingness to be governed at all makes us turn against the strong person, the Cromwell or Mussolini, as an intolerable tyrant, and relapse into the condition of Bunyan's Simple, Sloth, and Presumption the moment his back is turned or his body buried. We clamor for a despotic discipline out of the miseries of our anarchy, and, when we get it, clamor out of the severe regulation of our law and order for what we call liberty. At each blind rush from one extreme to the other we empty the baby out with the bath, learning nothing from our experience, and furnishing examples of the abuses of power and the horrors of liberty without ascertaining the limits of either.

Let us see whether we cannot clear up this matter of government versus liberty a little before we give up the human race as politically hopeless.

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## THE NATURAL LIMIT TO LIBERTY

ONCE for all, we are not born free; and we never can be free. When all the human tyrants are slain or deposed there will still be the supreme tyrant that can never be slain or deposed, and that tyrant is Nature. However easygoing Nature may be in the South Sea Islands, where you can bask in the sun and have food for the trouble of picking it up, even there you have to build yourself a hut, and, being a woman, to bear and rear children with travail and trouble. And, as the men are handsome and quarrelsome and jealous, and, having little else to do except make love, combine exercise with sport by killing one another, you have to defend yourself with your own hands.

But in our latitudes Nature is a hard taskmaster. In primitive conditions it was only by working strenuously early and late that we could feed and clothe and shelter ourselves sufficiently to be able to survive the rigors of our climate. We were often beaten by famine and flood, wolves and untimely rain and storms, and at best the women had to bear large families to make up for the deaths of children. They had to make the clothes of the family and bake its bread as well as cook its meals. Such leisure as a modern woman enjoys was not merely reprehensible; it was impossible. A chief had to work hard for his power and privileges as lawgiver, administrator, and chief of police; and had even his most pampered wife attempted to live as idly and wastefully as thousands of ordinary ladies now do with impunity, he would certainly have corrected her with a stick as thick as his thumb, and been held not only guiltless, but commendably active in the discharge of his obvious social duty. And the women were expected to do the like by their daughters instead of teaching them, as Victorian ladies did, that to do anything useful is disgraceful, and that if, as inevitably happens, something useful has to be done, you must ring for a servant and by no means do it yourself.

Now commercial civilization has been at root nothing more than the invention of ways of doing Nature's tasks with less labor. Men of science invent because they want to discover Nature's secrets; but such popular inventions as the bow and spear, the spade and plough, the wheel and arch, come from the desire to make work easier out of doors. Indoors the spinning wheel and loom, the

frying-pan and poker, the scrubbing brush and soap, the needle and safety pin, make domestic work easier. Some inventions make the work harder, but also much shorter and more intelligent, or else they make operations possible that were impossible before: for instance, the alphabet, Arabic numerals, ready reckoners, logarithms, and algebra. When instead of putting your back into your work you put the horse's or ox's back into it, and later on set steam and explosive spirits and electricity to do the work of the strained backs, a state of things is reached in which it becomes possible for people to have less work than is good for them instead of more. The needle becomes a sewing machine, the sweeping brush becomes a vacuum cleaner, and both are driven from a switch in the wall by an engine miles away instead of being treadled and wielded by foot and hand. In Chapter 42 we had a glance at the way in which we lost the old manual skill and knowledge of materials and of buying and selling, first through division of labor (a very important invention), and then through machinery. If you engage a servant today who has been trained at a first-rate institution in the use of all the most modern domestic machinery, and take her down to a country house, I will not go quite so far yet as to warn you that though she knows how to work the buttons on an automatic electric lift or step on and off an escalator without falling on her nose, she cannot walk up or downstairs; but it may come to that before long. Meanwhile you will have on your hands a supercivilized woman whom you will be glad to replace by a girl from the nearest primitive village, if any primitive villages are left in your neighborhood.

Let us, however, confine ourselves to the bearing of all this on that pet topic of the leisured class, our personal liberty.

What is liberty? Leisure. What is leisure? Liberty. If you can at any moment in the day say "I can do as I please for the next hour" then for that hour you are at liberty. If you say "I must now do such and such things during the next hour whether I like it or not" then you are not at liberty for that hour in spite of *Magna Carta*, the Declaration of Rights (or of Independence), and all the other political title-deeds of your so-called freedom.

May I, without being too intrusive, follow you throughout your daily routine? You are wakened in the morning, whether you like it or not, either by a servant or by that nerve-shattering abomination an alarm clock. You must get up and light the fire and wash and dress and prepare and eat your breakfast. So far, no liberty. You simply must. Then you have to make your bed, wash up the



breakfast things, sweep and tidy-up the place, and tidy yourself up, which means that you must more or less wash and re-dress your person until you are presentable enough to go out and buy fresh supplies of food and do other necessary shopping. Every meal you take involves preparation, including cooking, and washing up afterwards. In the course of these activities you will have to travel from place to place, which even in the house often means treadmill work on the stairs. You must rest a little occasionally. And finally you must go to sleep for eight hours.

In addition to all this you must earn the money to do your shopping and pay your rent and rates. This you can do in two main ways. You can work in some business for at least eight hours a day, plus the journeys to and from the place where you work. Or you can marry, in which case you will have to do for your husband and children all the preparation of meals and marketing that you had to do for yourself, to wash and dress the children until they are able to wash and dress themselves, and to do all the other things that belong to the occupation of wife and mother, including the administration of most of the family income. If you add up all the hours you are forced to spend in these ways, and subtract them from the twenty-four hours allowed you by Nature to get through them in, the remainder will be your daily leisure: that is, your liberty. Historians and journalists and political orators may assure you that the defeat of the Armada, the cutting off of King Charles's head, the substitution of Dutch William for Scottish James on the throne, the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts, and the conquest by the Suffragettes of Votes for Women, have set you free; and in moments of enthusiasm roused by these assurances you may sing fervently that Britons never never will be slaves. But though all these events may have done away with certain grievances from which you might be suffering if they had not occurred, they have added nothing to your leisure and therefore nothing to your liberty. The only Acts of Parliament that have really increased liberty: that is, added to the number of minutes in which a woman's time is her own, are the Factory Acts which reduced her hours of industrial labor, the Sunday Observance Acts which forbid commercial work on every seventh day, and the Bank Holiday Acts.

You see, then, that the common trick of speaking of liberty as if we were all either free or slaves, is a foolish one. Nature does not allow any of us to be wholly free. In respect of eating and drinking and washing and dressing and sleeping and the other necessary occasions of physical life, the most incorrigible tramp, sacrificing

every decency and honesty to freedom, is as much a slave for at least ten or eleven hours a day as a constitutional king, who has to live an almost entirely dictated life. An enslaved negress who has six hours a day to herself has more liberty than a "free" white woman who has only three. The white woman is free to go on strike, and the negress is not; but the negress can console herself by her freedom to commit suicide (fundamentally much the same thing), and by pitying the Englishwoman because, having so much less liberty, she is only poor white trash.

Now in our desire for liberty we all sympathize with the tramp. Our difference from him, when we do differ, is that some of us want leisure so that we may be able to work harder at the things we like than slaves, except under the most brutal compulsion, work at the things they must do. The tramp wastes his leisure and is miserable; we want to employ our leisure and be happy. For leisure, remember, is not rest. Rest, like sleep, is compulsory. Genuine leisure is freedom to do as we please, not to do nothing.

As I write, a fierce fight between the miners and the mine-owners has culminated in the increase of the miners' daily working hours from seven to eight. It is said that the miners want a seven hours working day. This is the wrong way to put it. What the miners want is not seven hours mining but seventeen hours off, out of which Nature will take at least ten for her occasions, and locomotion another. Thus the miner, by rigidly economizing his time, cutting out all loafing, and being fortunate in the weather and season, might conceivably manage to have six hours of effective leisure out of the twenty-four on the basis of seven hours earning and eleven hours for sleep, recreation, loafing and locomotion. And it is this six hours of liberty that he wants to increase. Even when the immediate object of his clamor for shorter hours of work is only a mask for his real intention of working as long as before but receiving overtime pay (half as much again) for the last hour, his final object is to obtain more money to spend on his leisure. The pieceworker, the moment the piecework rate enables him to earn as much in three or four days as he has been accustomed to earn in a week, is as likely as not to take two or three days off instead of working as long as before for twice as much money. He wants leisure more than money.

But the conclusive instance is that of property. Women desire to be women of property because property secures to them the maximum of leisure. The woman of property need not get up at six in the morning to light the fire. She need not prepare her husband's

breakfast nor her own. She need not wash-up nor empty the slops nor make the beds. She need not do the marketing, nor any shopping except the sort she enjoys. She need not bother more about her children than she cares to. She need not even brush her own hair; and if she must still eat and sleep and wash and move from place to place, these operations are made as luxurious as possible. She can count on at least twelve hours leisure every day. She may work harder at trying on new dresses, hunting, dancing, visiting, receiving, bridge, tennis, mountain climbing, or any other hobby she may have, than a laborer's wife works at her compulsory housekeeping; but she is doing what she likes all the time, and not what she must. And so, having her fill of liberty, she is usually an ardent supporter of every political movement that protects her privilege, and a strenuous and sometimes violently abusive opponent of every political movement that threatens to curtail her leisure or reduce the quantity of money at her disposal for its enjoyment. She clings to her position because it gives her the utmost possible liberty; and her grievance is that she finds it difficult to obtain and retain domestic servants because, though she offers them higher wages and better food and lodging and surroundings than they can secure for themselves as industrial employees, she also offers them less freedom. Their time, as they say, is never their own except for occasional evenings out. Formerly women of all classes, from governesses to scullery maids, went into domestic service because the only alternative was rough work in unbearably coarse company, and because, with comparatively gentle dispositions, they were for the most part illiterate and ignorant. Nowadays, being imprisoned in schools daily for at least nine years, they are no longer illiterate; and there are many occupations open to them (for instance, in city offices) that were formerly reserved for men. Even in rough employment the company is not so rough as it used to be; besides, women of gentle nurture are no longer physically disabled for them by the dress and habits that made the Victorian woman half an invalid. A hundred years ago a housemaid was so different from a herring-gutter or a ragpicker that she was for all business purposes an animal of another species. Today they are all "young ladies" in their leisure hours; and the single fact that a housemaid has less leisure than an industrial employee makes it impossible to obtain a housemaid who is not half imbecile in a factory town, and not easy to get one in a fishing port.

It is the same with men. But do not conclude that every woman and every man desires freedom above all things. Some people are

very much afraid of it. They are so conscious that they cannot fend for themselves either industrially or morally that they feel that the only safe condition for them is one of tutelage, in which they will always have someone to tell them not only what to do but how to behave. Women of this kind seek domestic service, and men military service, not in spite of the forfeiture of their freedom but because of it. Were it not for this factor in the problem it would be harder to get domestic servants and soldiers than it is. Yet the ideal of the servant and soldier is not continual tutelage and service: it is tutelage relieved by an occasional spree. They both want to be as free as they dare. Again, the very last thing the ordinary industrial male worker wants is to have to think about his work. That is the manager's job. What he wants to think about is his play. For its sake he wants his worktime to be as short, and his playtime as long, as he can afford. Women, from domestic necessity and habit, are more accustomed to think about their work than men; for a housewife must both work and manage; but she also is glad when her work is over.

The great problem of the distribution of the national income thus becomes also a problem of the distribution of necessary work and the distribution of leisure or liberty. And this leisure or liberty is what we all desire: it is the sphere of romance and infinite possibilities, whilst worktime is the sphere of cut and dried compulsory reality. All the inventions and expedients by which labor is made more productive are hailed with enthusiasm, and called progress, because they make more liberty possible for us. Unfortunately, we distribute the leisure gained by the invention of the machines in the most absurd way that can be conceived. Take your woman of property whom we have just discussed, with her fifteen hours leisure out of the twentyfour. How does she obtain that leisure? Not by inventing anything, but by owning machines invented by somebody else and keeping the leisure they produce all to herself, leaving those who actually work the machines with no more leisure than they had before. Do not blame her: she cannot help herself, poor lady! that is Capitalist law.

Look at it in the broader case of the whole nation. Modern methods of production enable each person in the nation to produce much more than they need consume to keep themselves alive and reproduce themselves. That means that modern methods produce not only a national fund of wealth but a national fund of leisure or liberty. Now just as you can distribute the wealth so as to make a few people monstrously rich whilst leaving all the rest as poor as

before, you can distribute the leisure in such a way as to make a few people free for fifteen hours a day whilst the rest remain as they were, with barely four hours to dispose of as they please. And this is exactly what the institution of private property has done, and why a demand for its abolition and for the equal distribution of the national leisure or liberty among the whole population has arisen under the banner of Socialism.

Let us try to make a rough picture of what would happen if leisure, and consequently productive work, were equally distributed. Let us pretend that if we all worked four hours a day for thirtyfive years each of us could live as well as persons with at least a thousand a year do now. Let us assume that this state of things has been established by general agreement, involving a compromise between the people who want to work only two hours and live on a five-hundred-a-year scale and those who want to work four hours and live twice as expensively!

The difficulty then arises that some kinds of work will not fit themselves into instalments of four hours a day. Suppose you are married, for example. If your husband is in business there is no trouble for him. He does every day what he now does on Saturday: that is, begins at nine and knocks off at one. But what about your work? The most important work in the world is that of bearing and rearing children; for without that the human race would presently be extinct. All women's privileges are based on that fact. Now a woman cannot be pregnant for four hours a day, and normal for the rest of it. Nor can she nurse her infant for four hours and neglect it until nine next morning. It is true that pregnancy does not involve complete and continuous disablement from every other productive activity: indeed, no fact is better established by experience than that any attempt to treat it as such is morbid and dangerous. As some writers inelegantly express it, it is not a whole time job. Nursing is much more continuously exacting, as children in institutions who receive only what ignorant people call necessary attention mostly die, whilst home children who are played with and petted and coddled and tossed and sung-to survive with a dirty rag or two for clothing, and a thatched cabin with one room and a clay floor for habitation.

A four hours working day, then, does not mean that everybody can begin work at nine and leave off at one. Pregnancy and nursing are only items in the long list of vitally important occupations that cannot be interrupted and resumed at the sound of a hooter. It is possible in a factory to keep a continuous process going by having

six shifts of workers to succeed one another during the twentyfour hours, so that each shift works no more than four hours; but a ship, being a home as well as a workplace, cannot accommodate six crews. Even if we built warships big enough to hold 5000 and carry food for them, the shifts could not retire from Judland battles at the end of each spell of four hours. Nor is such leisure as is possible on board ship the equivalent of shore leisure, as the leisured passengers, with their silly deck games, and their agonized scamperings fore and aft for exercise know only too well.

Then there are the jobs that cannot be done in shifts because they must be done by the same person throughout with a continuance that stretches human endurance to the utmost limit. A chemist or physicist watching an experiment, an astronomer watching an eclipse, a doctor or nurse watching a difficult case, a Cabinet minister dealing with news from the front during a war, a farmer saving his hay in the face of an unfavorable weather forecast, or a body of scavengers clearing away a snowfall, must go on if necessary until they drop, four hours or no four hours. Handel's way of composing on oratorio was to work at it night and day until it was finished, keeping himself awake as best he might. Explorers are lucky if they do not die of exhaustion, as many of them have, from prolonged effort and endurance.

A four hour working day therefore, though just as feasible as an eight hour day is now, or the five day week which is the latest cry, is in practice only a basis of calculation. In factory and office work, and cognate occupations out of doors, it can be carried out literally. It may mean short and frequent holidays or long and rare ones. I do not know what happens to you in this respect; but in my own case, in spite of the most fervent resolutions to order my work more sensibly, and of the fact that an author's work can as a rule quite well be divided into limited daily periods, I am usually obliged to work myself to the verge of a complete standstill and then go away for many weeks to recuperate. Eight or nine months overwork, and three or four months change and overleisure, is very common among professional persons.

Then there is a vital difference between routine work and what is called creative or original work. When you hear of a man achieving eminence by working sixteen hours a day for thirty years, you may admire that apparently unnatural feat; but you must not conclude that he has any other sort of ability: in fact you may quite safely put him down as quite incapable of doing anything that has not been done before, and doing it in the old way. He never has to think

or invent. To him today's work is a repetition of yesterday's work. Compare him, for example, with Napoleon. If you are interested in the lives of such people you are probably tired of hearing how Napoleon could keep on working with fierce energy long after all the members of his council were so exhausted that they could not even pretend to keep awake. But if you study the less often quoted memoirs of his secretary Bourrienne you will learn that Napoleon often moodled about for a week at a time doing nothing but play with children or read trash or waste his time helplessly. During his enforced leisure in St Helena, which he enjoyed so little that he probably often exclaimed, after Cowper's Selkirk, "Better live in the midst of alarms than reign in this horrible place", he was asked how long a general lasted. He replied, "Six years". An American president is not expected to last more than four years. In England, where there is no law to prevent a worn-out dotard from being Prime Minister, even so imposing a parliamentary figure as Gladstone had to be practically superannuated when he tried to continue into the eighteen-nineties the commanding activities which had exhausted him in the seventies. To descend to more commonplace instances you cannot make an accountant work as long as a bookkeeper, nor a historian as continuously as a scrivener or typist, though they are performing the same arithmetical and manual operations. One will be tired out in three hours; the other can do eight without turning a hair with the help of a snack or a cup of tea to relieve her boredom occasionally. In the face of such differences you cannot distribute work equally and uniformly in quantities measures by time. What you can do is to give the workers on the whole, equal leisure, bearing in mind that rest and recuperation are not leisure, and that periods of necessary recuperation in idleness must be counted as work, and often very irksome work, to those who have been prostrated by extraordinary efforts excessively prolonged.

The long and short of it is that freedom with a large F, general and complete, has no place in nature. In practice the questions that arise in its name are, first, how much leisure can we afford to allow ourselves? and second, how far can we be permitted to do what we like when we are at leisure? For instance, may we hunt stags on Dartmoor? Some of us say no; and if our opinion becomes law, the liberty of the Dartmoor Hunt will be curtailed to that extent. May we play golf on Sundays during church hours? Queen Elizabeth would not only have said no, but made churchgoing compulsory, and thereby have made Sunday a half-holiday instead of a

whole one. Nowadays we enjoy the liberty of Sunday golf. Under Charles II, on the other hand, women were not allowed to attend Quaker meetings, and were flogged if they did. In fact attendance at any sort of religious service except that of the Church of England was a punishable offence; and though it was not possible to enforce this law fully against Roman Catholics and Jews, its penalties were ruthlessly inflicted on George Fox and John Bunyan, though King Charles himself sympathized with them. It cost us a revolution to establish comparative "liberty of conscience"; and we can now build and attend handsome temples of The Church of Christ Scientist, and form fantastic Separatist sects by the score if it pleases us.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand many things that we were free to do formerly we may not do now. In England until quite lately, as in Italy to this day, when a woman married, all her property became her husband's; and if she had the ill luck to marry a drunken blackguard, he could leave her to make a home for herself and her children by her own work, and then come back and seize everything she possessed and spend it in drink and debauchery. He could do it again and again, and sometimes did. Attempts to remedy this were denounced by happily married pious people as attacks on the sanctity of the marriage tie; and women who advocated a change were called unwomanly; but at last commonsense and decency prevailed; and in England a married woman is now so well protected from plunder and rapine committed by her husband that a Married Men's Rights agitation has begun.

Outside the home a factory owner might and did work little children to death with impunity, and do or leave undone anything he liked in his factory. Today he can no more do what he likes there than you can do what you like in Westminster Abbey. He is compelled by law to put up in a conspicuous place a long list of the things he must do and the things he may not do, whether he likes it or not. And when he is at leisure he is still subject to laws that restrict his freedom and impose duties and observances on him. He may not drive his motor car faster than twenty miles an hour (though he always does), and must drive on the left and pass on the right in England, and drive to the right and pass on the left in France. In public he must wear at least some clothing, even when he is taking a sunbath. He may not shoot wild birds or catch fish for sport except during certain seasons of the year; and he may not shoot children for sport at all. And the liberty of women in these respects is limited as the liberty of men is.



I need not bother you with more instances: you can think of dozens for yourself. Suffice it that without leisure there is no liberty, and without law there is no secure leisure. In an ideal free State, the citizen at leisure would find herself headed off by a police officer (male or female) whenever she attempted to do something that her fellow citizens considered injurious to them, or even to herself; but the assumption would be that she had a most sacred right to do as she pleased, however eccentric her conduct might appear, provided it was not mischievous. It is the contrary assumption that she must not do anything that she is not expressly licensed to do, like a child who must come to its mother and ask leave to do anything that is not in the daily routine, that destroys liberty. There is in British human nature, and I daresay in human nature in general, a very strong vein of pure inhibiteness. Never forget the children in Punch, who, discussing how to amuse themselves, decided to find out what the baby was doing and tell it it mustnt. Forbiddance is an exercise of power; and we all have a will to personal power which conflicts with the will to social freedom. It is right that it should be jealously resisted when it leads to acts of irresponsible tyranny. But when all is said, the people who shout for freedom without understanding its limitations, and call Socialism or any other advance in civilization slavery because it involves new laws as well as new liberties, are as obstructive to the extension of leisure and liberty as the more numerous victims of the Inhibition Complex who, if they could, would handcuff everybody rather than face the risk of having their noses punched by somebody.

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## RENT OF ABILITY

HAVING cleared up the Liberty question by a digression (which must have been a relief) from the contemplation of capital running away with us, perhaps another digression on the equally confused question of the differences in ability between one person and another may not be out of place; for the same people who are in a continual scare about losing the liberty which they have mostly not got are usually much troubled about these differences. Years ago I wrote a small book entitled Socialism and Superior Brains which I need not repeat here, as it is still accessible. It was a reply to the late William Hurrell Mallock, who took it as a matter of course, apparently, that the proper use of cleverness in this world is to take advantage of stupid people to obtain a larger share than they of the nation's income. Rascally as this notion is, it is too

common to be ignored. The proper social use of brains is to increase the amount of wealth to be divided, not to grab an unfair share of it: and one of the most difficult of our police problems is to prevent this grabbing, because it is a principle of Capitalism that everyone shall use not only her land and capital, but her cunning, to obtain as much money for herself as possible. Capitalism indeed compels her to do so by making no other provision for the clever ones than what they can make out of their cleverness.

Let us begin by taking the examples which delight and dazzle us: that is, the possessors of some lucrative personal talent. A lady with a wonderful voice can hire a concert room to sing in, and admit nobody who does not pay her. A gentleman able to paint a popular picture can hang it in a gallery with a turnstile at the door, passable only on payment. A surgeon who has mastered a dangerous operation can say to his patient, in effect, "Your money or your life". Giants, midgets, Siamese twins, and two-headed singers exhibit themselves for money as monsters. Attractive ladies receive presents enough to make them richer than their plainer or more scrupulous neighbors. So do fascinating male dancing partners. Popular actresses sometimes insist on being pampered and allowed to commit all sorts of follies and extravagances on the ground that they cannot keep up their peculiar charm without them; and the public countenances their exactions fondly.

These cases need not worry us. They are very scarce: indeed if they became common their power to enrich would vanish. They do not confer either industrial power or political privilege. The world is not ruled by prima donnas and painters, two-headed nightingales and surgical baronets, as it is by financiers and industrial organizers. Geniuses and monsters may make a great deal of money; but they have to work for it. I myself, through the accident of a lucrative talent, have sometimes made more than a hundred times as much money in a year as my father ever did; but he, as an employer, had more power over the lives of others than I. A practical political career would stop my professional career at once. It is true that I or any other possessor of a lucrative talent or charm can buy land and industrial incomes with our spare money, and thus become landlords and capitalists. But if that resource were cut off, by Socialism or any other change in the general constitution of society, I doubt whether anyone would grudge us our extra spending money. An attempt by the Government to tax it so as to reduce us to the level of ordinary mortals would probably be highly unpopular, because the pleasure we give is delightful and

widespread, whilst the harm we do by our conceit and tantrums and jealousies and spoiltness is narrowly limited to the unfortunate few who are in personal contact with us. A prima donna with a rope of pearls ten feet long and a coronet of Kohinoors does not make life any worse for the girl with a string of beads who, by buying a five shilling ticket, helps to pay for the pearls: she makes it better by enchanting it.

Besides, we know by our own experience, not only of prima donnas but of commercial millionaires, that regular daily personal expenditure cannot be carried beyond that of the richest class to be found in the community. Persons richer than that, like Cecil Rhodes, Andrew Carnegie, and Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite (to name only the dead), cannot spend their incomes, and are forced to give away money in millions for galleries and museums which they fill with magnificent collections and then leave to the public, or for universities, or churches, or prizes, or scholarships, or any sort of public object that appeals to them. If equality of income were general, a freak income here and there would not enable its possessor to live differently from the rest. A popular soprano might be able to fill the Albert Hall for 100 nights in succession at a guinea a head for admission; but she could not obtain a lady's maid unless ladies' maids were a social institution. Nor could she leave a farthing to her children unless inheritance were a social institution, nor buy an unearned and as yet unproduced income for them unless Capitalism were a social institution. Thus, though it is always quite easy for a Government to checkmate any attempt of an individual to become richer than her neighbors by supertaxing her or directly prohibiting her methods, it is unlikely that it will ever be worth while to do so where the method is the exercise of a popular personal talent.

But when we come to that particular talent which makes its money out of the exercise of other people's talents, the case becomes gravely different. To allow Cleopatra to make money out of her charms is one thing, to allow a trader to become enormously rich by engaging five hundred Cleopatras at ten pounds a week or less, and hiring them out at ten pounds a day or more, is quite another. We may forgive a burglar in our admiration of his skill and nerve; but for the fence who makes money by purchasing the burglar's booty at a tenth of its value it is impossible to feel any sympathy. When we come to reputable women and honest men we find that they are exploited in the same way. Civilization makes matters worse in this respect, because civilization means division

of labor. Remember the pin makers and pin machines. In a primitive condition of society the maker of an article saves the money to buy the materials, selects them, purchases them, and, having made the article out of these materials, sells it to the user or consumer. To-day the raising of the money to buy the materials is a separate business; the selection and purchasing is another separate business; the making is divided between several workers or else done by a machine tended by a young person; and the marketing is yet another separate business. Indeed it is much more complicated than that, because the separate businesses of buying materials and marketing products are themselves divided into several separate business; so that between the origin of the product in raw material from the hand of Nature and its final sale across the counter to you there may be dozens of middlemen, of whom you complain because they each take a toll which raises the price to you, and it is impossible for you to find out how many of them are really necessary agents in the process and how many mere interceptors and parasites.

The same complication is found in that large part of the world's work which consists, not in making things, but in service. The woman who once took the wool that her husband had just shorn from their sheep, and with her own hands transformed it into a garment and sold it to the wearer, or clothed her family with it, is now replaced by a financier, a shipper, a woolbroker, a weaving mill, a wholesaler, a shopkeeper, a shop assistant, and Heaven knows how many others besides, each able to do her own bit of the process but ignorant of the other bits, and unable to do even her own bit until all the others are doing their bits at the same time. Any one of them without the others would be like an artillery man without a cannon or a shop assistant with nothing to sell.

Now if you go through all these indispensable parties to any industry or service, you will come on our question of exceptional ability in its most pressing and dangerous form. You will find, for instance, that whereas any able-bodied normal woman can be trained to become a competent shop assistant, or a shorthand typist and operator of a calculating machine (arithmetic is done by machines nowadays), or a factory hand, or a teacher, hardly five out of every hundred can manage a business or administer an estate or handle a large capital. The number of persons who can do what they are told is always greatly in excess of the number who can tell others what to do. If an educated woman asks for more than four or five pounds a week in business, nobody asks

whether she is a good woman or a bad one: the question is, is there a post for her in which she will have to make decisions, and if so, can she be trusted to make them. If the answer is yes, she will be paid more than a living wage: if not, no.

Even when there is no room for original decisions, and there is nothing to do but keep other people hard at their allotted work, and maintain discipline generally, the ability to do this is an exceptional gift and has a special value. It may be nothing more admirable than the result of a combination of brute energy with an unamiable indifference to the feelings of others; but its value is unquestionable: it makes its possessor a forewoman or foreman in a factory, a wardress in a prison, a matron in an institution, a sergeant in the army, a mistress in a school, and the like. Both the managing people and the mere disciplinarians may be, and often are, heartily detested; but they are so necessary that any body of ordinary persons left without what they call superiors, will immediately elect them. A crew of pirates, subject to no laws except the laws of nature, will elect a boatswain to order them about and a captain to lead them and navigate the ship, though the one may be the most insufferable bully and the other the most tyrannical scoundrel on board. In the revolutionary army of Napoleon an expeditionary troop of dragoons, commanded by an officer who became terrified and shammed illness, insisted on the youngest of their number, a boy of sixteen taking command, because he was an aristocrat, and they were accustomed to make aristocrats think for them. He afterwards became General Marbot: you will find the incident recorded in his memoirs. Every woman knows that the most strongminded woman in the house can set up a domestic tyranny which is sometimes a reign of terror. Without directors most of us would be like riderless horses in a crowded street. The philosopher Herbert Spencer, though a very clever man, had the amiable trait in his character of an intense dislike to coercion. He could not bring himself even to coerce his horse; and the result was that he had to sell it and go on foot, because the horse, uncoerced, could do nothing but stop and graze. Tolstoy, equally a professed humanitarian, tamed and managed the wildest horses; but he did it by the usual method of making things unpleasant for the horse until it obeyed him.

However, horses and human beings are alike in that they very seldom object to be directed: they are usually only too glad to be saved the trouble of thinking and planning for themselves. Ungovernable people are the exception and not the rule. When

authority is abused and subordination made humiliating, both are resented; and anything from a mutiny to a revolution may ensue; but there is no instance on record of a beneficially and tactfully exercised authority provoking any reaction. Our mental laziness is a guarantee of our docility: the mother who says "How dare you go out without asking my leave?" presently finds herself exclaiming "Why cant you think for yourself instead of running to me for everything?" But she would be greatly astonished if a rude motor car manufacturer said to her "Why cant you make a car for yourself instead of running to me for it?"

I am myself by profession what is called an original thinker, my business being to question and test all the established creeds and codes to see how far they are still valid and how far worn out or superseded, and even to draft new creeds and codes. But creeds and codes are only two out of the hundreds of useful articles that make for a good life. All the other articles I have to take as they are offered to me on the authority of those who understand them; so that though many people who cannot bear to have an established creed or code questioned regard me as a dangerous revolutionary and a most insubordinate fellow, I have to be in most matters as docile a creature as you could desire to meet. When a railway porter directs me to number ten platform I do not strike him to earth with a shout of "Down with tyranny!" and rush violently to number one platform. I accept his direction because I want to be directed, and want to get into the right train. No doubt if the porter bullied and abused me, and I, after submitting to this, found that my train really started from number seven platform and that the number ten train landed me in Portsmouth when my proper destination was Birmingham, I should rise up against that porter and do what I could to contrive his downfall; but if he had been reasonably civil and had directed me aright I should rally to his defence if any attempt were made to depose him. I have to be housekept-for, nursed, doctored, and generally treated like a child in all sorts of situations in which I do not know what to do; and far from resenting such tutelage I am only too glad to avail myself of it. The first time I was ever in one of those electric lifts which the passengers work for themselves instead of being taken up and down by a conductor pulling at a rope, I almost cried, and was immensely relieved when I stepped out alive.

You may think I am wandering from our point; but I know too well by experience that there is likely to be at the back of your mind a notion that it is in our nature to resent authority and subordin-

ation as such, and that only an unpopular and stern coercion can maintain them. Have I not indeed just been impressing on you that the miseries of the world today are due in great part to our objection, not merely to bad government, but to being governed at all? But you must distinguish. It is true that we dislike being interfered with, and want to do as we like when we know what to do, or think we know. But when there is something that obviously must be done, and only five in every hundred of us know how to do it, then the odd ninetyfive will not merely be led by the five: they will clamor to be led, and will, if necessary, kill anyone who obstructs the leaders. That is why it is so easy for ambitious humbugs to get accepted as leaders. No doubt competent leadership may be made unpopular by bad manners and pretension to general superiority; and subordination may be made intolerable by humiliation. Leaders who produce these results should be ruthlessly cashiered, no matter how competent they are in other respects, because they destroy self-respect and happiness, and create a dangerous resentment complex which reduces the competence and upsets the tempers of those whom they lead. But you may take it as certain that authority and subordination in themselves are never unpopular, and can be trusted to re-establish themselves after the most violent social convulsion. What is to be feared is less their overthrow than the idolization of those who exercise authority successfully. Nelson was idolized by his seamen; Lenin was buried as a saint by revolutionary Russia; Signor Mussolini is adored in Italy as *The Leader* (*Il Duce*); but no anarchist preaching resistance to authority as such has ever been popular or ever will be.

Now it is unfortunately one of the worst vices of the Capitalist system that it destroys the social equality that is indispensable to natural authority and subordination. The very word subordination, which is properly co-ordination, betrays this perversion. Under it directing ability is sold in the market like fish; and, like sturgeon, it is dear because it is scarce. By paying the director more than the directee it creates a difference of class between them; and the difference of class immediately changes a direction or command which naturally would not only not be resented but desired and begged for, into an assertion of class superiority which is fiercely resented. "Who are you that you should order me about? I am as good as you", is an outburst that never occurs when Colonel Smith gives an order to Lieutenant the Duke of Ten-counties. But it very often rises to the lips of Mrs Hicks (though she may leave it unspoken out of natural politeness or fear of con-

sequences), who lives in a slum, when she receives from Mrs Huntingdon Howard, who lives in a square, an order, however helpful to her, given in a manner which emphasizes, and is meant to emphasize, the lady's conviction that Mrs Hicks is an inferior sort of animal. And Mrs Howard sometimes feels, when Lady Billionham refuses to know her, that Lord Billionham's rank is but the guinea's stamp: her man Huntingdon's the gowd for a' that. Nothing would please her better than to take her superincommed neighbor down a peg. Whereas if Mrs Hicks and Mrs Huntingdon Howard and Lady Billionham all had equal incomes, and their children could intermarry without derogation, they would never dream of quarrelling because they (or their husbands) could tell one another what to do when they did not know themselves. To be told what to do is to escape responsibility for its consequences; and those who fear any dislike of such telling between equals know little of human nature.

The worst of it is that Capitalism produces a class of persons so degraded by their miserable circumstances that they are incapable of responding to an order civilly given, and have to be fiercely scolded or cursed and kicked before any work can be got out of them; and these poor wretches in turn produce a class of slave-drivers who know no other methods of maintaining discipline. The only remedy is not to produce such people. They are abortions produced by poverty, and will disappear with it.

Reluctance to command is a more serious difficulty. When a couple of soldiers are sent on any duty one of them must be made a corporal for the occasion, as there must be someone to make the decisions and be responsible for them. Usually both men object: each trying to shove the burden on to the other. When they differ in this respect the Platonic rule is to choose the reluctant man, as the probability is that the ambitious one is a conceited fool who does not feel the responsibility because he does not understand it. This kind of reluctance cannot be overcome by extra pay. It may be overcome by simple coercion, as in the case of common jurors. If you are a direct ratepayer you may find yourself at any moment summoned to serve on a jury and make decisions involving the disgrace or vindication, the imprisonment or freedom, the life or death of your fellow-creatures, as well as to maintain the rights of the jury against the continual tendency of the Bench to dictate its decisions. You are not paid to do this: you are forced to do it, just as men were formerly pressed into the navy or forced to sit in Parliament against their will and that of their constituents.



But though in the last resort coercion remains available as a means of compelling citizens to undertake duties from which they shrink, it is found in practice that fitness for special kinds of work carries with it a desire to exercise it, even at serious material disadvantages. Mozart could have made much more money as a valet than he did as the greatest composer of his time, and indeed one of the greatest composers of all time; nevertheless he chose to be a composer and not a valet. He knew that he would be a bad valet, and believed that he could be a good composer; and this outweighed all money considerations with him. When Napoleon was a subaltern he was by no means a success. When Nelson was a captain he was found so unsatisfactory that he was left without a ship on half pay for several years. But Napoleon was a great general and Nelson a great admiral; and I have not the smallest doubt, nor probably have you, that if Napoleon and Nelson had been forced to choose between being respectively a drummer boy and a cabin boy and being a general and an admiral for the same money, they would have chosen the job in which their genius had full scope. They would even have accepted less money if they could have secured their proper job in no other way. Have we not already noted, in Chapter 6, how the capitalist system leaves men of extraordinary and beneficent talent poor whilst making nonentities and greedy money hunters absurdly rich?

Let us therefore dismiss the fear that persons of exceptional ability need special inducements to exercise that ability to the utmost. Experience proves that even the most severe discouragements and punishments cannot restrain them from trying to do so. Let us return to the real social problem: that of preventing them from taking advantage of the vital necessity and relative scarcity of certain kinds of ability to extort excessive incomes.

In socialized services no difficulty arises. The civil servant, the judge, the navy captain, the field marshal, the archbishop, however extraordinarily able, gets no more than any routinier of his rank and seniority. A real gentleman is not supposed to sell himself to the highest bidder: he asks his country for a sufficient provision and a dignified position in return for the best work he can do for it. A real lady can say no less. But in capitalist commerce they are both forced to be cads: that is, to hold up to ransom those to whom their services are indispensable, and become rich at their expense. The mere disciplinarian cannot extort very much because disciplinarians of one sort or another are not very scarce. But the organizer and financier is in a strong position. The owner of a big business,

if his employees ask for anything more than a subsistence wage as their share of its product, can always say "Well, if you are not satisfied, take the business and work it yourself without me". This they are unable to do. The Trade Union to which his employees belong may be tempted to take him at his word; but it soon finds itself unable to carry on, that sort of management not being its job. He says in effect, and often in so many words, "You cannot do without me; so you must work on my terms". They reply with perfect truth "Neither can you do without us: let us see you organize without any workers to organize". But he beats them; and the reason is not that he can do without them any more than they can do without him (or her), but that his bargain for the use of his ability is not really made with them but with the landlords whose land he is using and the capitalists who have lent him the capital for his enterprise. It is to them that he can say unanswerably "You cannot do without me" They may say "Yes we can. We can tell the workers that unless they give up everything they can make out of our land and capital to us except what is enough to keep them alive and renew themselves from generation to generation they shall starve; because they cannot produce without land and capital, and we own all there is available of both." "That is true" retorts the able organizer and financier; "but please to remember that without an elaborate scientific organization of their labor they can produce no more than a mob of allotment holders, or of serfs on a tenth century manor, whereas if I organize them for you industrially and financially I can multiply their product a thousand-fold. Even if you have to pay me a large share of the increase due to my ability you are still far richer than if you did without me." And to this there is no reply. In this way there arises under Capitalism not only a rent of land and a rent of capital (called interest), but a rent of ability (called profit); and just as in order to secure equality of income it becomes necessary to nationalize land and capital, so it becomes necessary to nationalize ability. We already do this in part by taxing profits. But we do it completely only when, as in the public services, we give it direct national or municipal employment.

Note that rent of ability is a form of rent of labor. Rent is a word that it is very necessary to understand, and that very few people do understand: they think it is only what they have to pay to their landlord. But technically rent is a price that arises whenever there are differences in the yield of any particular source of wealth. When there is a natural difference between the yield of one field and another, or one coal-mine and another, or between the advan-

tages of one building site and another, people will pay more for the better than for the worse; and that extra price is rent. Similarly, when there is a difference between the business ability of one person and another, the price of that difference is rent. You cannot abolish rent, because you cannot abolish the natural difference between one cornfield and another, one coal-field and another, or one person and another; but you can nationalize it by nationalizing the land, the mines, and the labor of the country either directly or by national appropriation of their product by taxation, as to which latter method, as we have seen, there are limits. Until this is done, rent of ability in profiteering will make its possessors rich enough to make their children idle landlords and capitalists and destroy economic equality. Great astronomers, chemists, mathematicians, physicists, philosophers, explorers, discoverers, teachers, preachers, sociologists, and saints may be so poor that their wives are worn-out in a constant struggle to keep up appearances and make both ends meet; but the business organizers pile millions on millions whilst their unfortunate daughters carry about diamonds and sables to advertise their parents' riches, and drink cocktails until they feel so bad inside that they pay large sums to surgeons to cut them open and find out what is the matter with them. If you reproach these organizers for their inordinate gains, they tell you — or they would tell you if they understood their own position and could express it intelligibly — that every penny they make is made by making money for other people as well; that before they can spend a farthing on themselves they must provide rent for the landlord, interest for the capitalist, and wages for the proletarian on a scale that would be impossible without them; and that England can support five times the number of people she could a hundred years ago because her industries are better organized and more amply financed by them and their like. This is true; but you need not be abashed by it, for which of us has not to provide rent for the landlord, interest for the capitalist, and wages for the laborer before we can spend a penny on ourselves? And why should the organizer and financier be paid more for the exercise of his particular faculty than we who have to co-operate with him by the exercise of our particular faculties before he can produce a loaf of bread or a glass of milk? It is not natural necessity but the capitalist system that enables him to snatch more than his fellow workers from the welter of competitive commerce; and while this lasts we shall have the financier's daughter saying to the scavenger's daughter "What would your common dirty father do without my father, who is

going to be made a lord?" and the scavenger's daughter retorting "What would your greedy robber of a father do if my father did not keep the streets clean for him?" Of course you have never heard a lady or a young person talk like that. And probably you never will. They are too polite and too thoughtless to discuss their fathers' positions. Besides, they never speak to one another. But if they did, and anything upset their tempers, their last words before they came to blows would be just those which I have imagined. If you doubt it, read what the capitalist papers say about Trade Unionists and Socialists, and what the proletarian papers say about landlords and capitalists and bosses. Do you suppose that the charwoman, who has worked in her own necessary way all her life as hard as or harder than any financier, and in the end has nothing to leave to her daughter but her pail and scrubbing brush, really believes, or ever will believe, that Lady Billionham, inheriting a colossal income from her father the financier, has any moral right to her money? Or, if your father had discovered and worked out the theory of relativity, and was acknowledged throughout the world to have the greatest mind since Newton's, would you consider it morally satisfactory to be obliged to jump at an offer of marriage from a Chicago pork king to enable your illustrious parent to have more than one presentable suit of clothes, knowing all the time that if it had not been for the work of men like your father in pure science not a wheel in the whole vast machinery of modern production would be turning, nor a bagman be able to travel faster than Marco Polo? Privately appropriated rent, whether of land, capital, or ability, makes bad blood; and it is of bad blood that civilizations die. That is why it is our urgent business to see that Lord Billionham gets no more than Einstein, and neither of them more than the charwoman. You cannot equalize their abilities, but fortunately you can equalize their incomes. Billionham's half-crown is as good as Einstein's two-and-sixpence; and the charwoman's thirty pennies will buy as much bread as either. Equalize them in that respect, and their sons and daughters will be intermarriageable, which will be a very good thing for them, and lead to an enormous improvement of our human stock, the quality of which is the most important thing in the world.

You are now in possession of enough knowledge of Socialism and Capitalism to enable you to understand what is going on in the

world industrially and politically. I shall not advise you to discuss these matters with your friends. They would listen in distressed silence and then tell the neighborhood that you are what they imagine a Bolshevik to be.

It is possible, however, that you may be interested in current party politics yourself, even to the extent of attending party meeting, applauding party candidates, canvassing for party votes, and experiencing all the emotions of party enthusiasm, party loyalty, and party conviction that the other party and its candidate are enemies of the human race. In that case I must give you a warning.

Do not rush to the conclusion that Socialism will be established by a Socialist party and opposed by an anti-Socialist party. Within my lifetime I have seen the Conservatives, when in opposition, vehemently opposing and denouncing a measure proposed by the Liberals, and, when they had defeated the Liberals and come into power, pass that very measure themselves in a rather more advanced form. And I have seen the Liberals do the same, and this, too, not in matters of no great consequences, but in such far-reaching social changes as Free Trade, the enfranchisement of the working classes, the democratization of local government, and the buying-out of the Irish landlords. The Spanish lady in Byron's poem, who, "whisp'ring 'I will ne'er consent', consented", was a model of consistency compared to our party governments. We have at present a Capitalist party opposed by a Labor party; but it is quite possible that all the legislative steps towards Socialism will be taken when the anti-Socialist party is in power, and pretty certain that at least half of them will. When they are proposed by a Capitalist Government they will be opposed by the Labor Opposition, and when they are proposed by a Labor Government they will be opposed by the Capitalist Opposition, because "it is the business of an Opposition to oppose".

There is another possibility which may disappoint your expectation. The Labor Party is growing rapidly. Twenty years ago it did not exist officially in Parliament. Today it is the official Opposition. If it continues to grow at this rate the time is not very far off when it will take practically complete possession of the House of Commons. The Conservatives and Liberals left will, even in coalition, be too few to constitute an effective Opposition, much less form a Government. But beware of assuming that the result will be a unanimous House of Commons with an unopposed Labor Government carrying everything before it. Do not even assume that the Labor Party will split into two parties, one Con-

servative and the other Progressive. That would be the happiest of the possibilities. The danger is that it may split into half a dozen or more irreconcilable groups, making parliamentary government impossible. That is what happened in the Long Parliament in the seventeenth century, when men were just what they are now, except that they had no telephones nor airplanes. The Long Parliament was united at first by its opposition to the King. But when it cut off the King's head, it immediately became so disunited that Cromwell, like Signor Mussolini today, had at last to suppress its dissensions by military force, and rule more despotically than ever the king had dared. When Cromwell died, it reassembled and split up again worse than ever, bringing about such a hopeless deadlock in government that there was no way out of the mess but to send for the dead King's son and use him, under his father's title, as the figure head of a plutocratic oligarchy exercising all the old kingly powers and greatly extending them.

If six hundred Labor members were returned at the next General Election history might repeat itself. The Socialists, the Trade Unionists who are not Socialists, the Communists who are not Communists but only pseudo Bolsheviks, the Republicans, the Constitutional-Monarchists, the old Parliamentary hands who are pure Opportunists and the uncompromising Idealists, to say nothing of the Churchmen and Anti-clericals (Episcopalians and Separatists), the Deists and Atheists, would come to loggerheads at once. As far as I can see, nothing could avert a repetition of the seventeenth century catastrophe, or the modern Italian and Spanish ones, except a solid Socialist majority of members who really know what Socialism means and are prepared to subordinate all their traditional political and religious differences to its establishment. Unfortunately most of the people who call themselves Socialists at present do not know what Socialism means and attach its name to all sorts of fads and fashions and resentments and follies that have nothing to do with it. A Labor electoral triumph may end either in another Cromwell or Napoleon III or Mussolini or General Primo de Rivera if there happens to be one at hand, or in the passing of power to any party that is solid enough to keep together and vote together, even though its solidarity be the solidarity of sheepish stupidity or panic-stricken retreat. Stupidity and cowardice never lose this advantage. You must have noticed among your acquaintances that the very conventional ones have all the same old opinions, and are quite impervious to new ones, whilst the unconventional ones are all over the shop with all sorts

of opinions, and disagree with and despise one another furiously. That is why, though all progress depends on the unconventional people who want to change things, they have so little influence politically. They pull hard; but they do not pull together; and they pull in different directions. The people whom in your moments of impatience with their dullness you call stick-in-the-muds either pull all together and in the same direction (generally backwards), or, more formidably still, stand together solid and foursquare, refusing to move in any direction. Against stupidity, said Schiller, the gods themselves fight in vain. Long before Schiller, Solomon said "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly". They were both right.

Yet it is a mistake to vote for stupidity on the ground that stupid people do not quarrel among themselves. Within the limits of their conservatism they quarrel more irreconcilably, because more unreasonably, than comparatively clever people. That is why we call them pigheaded. If six hundred of them were returned at the next General Election, so that they had no longer anything to fear from Labor or Liberalism or any other section, it would be just as impossible to keep them together as if they were proletarians. In 1924 the country was stampeded by a ridiculous anti-Russian scare into returning anti-Socialists in a majority of more than two to one. The result was, not a very solid Government, but a very fragmentary one. It soon split up into reckless Diehard Coercionists, timid Compromisers, cautious Opportunists, Low Church Protestants, Anglican Catholics, Protectionists from the Midlands, Free Traders from the ports, country gentlemen, city bosses, Imperialists, Little Englanders, innocents who think that Trade Unions ought to be exterminated like nests of vipers, and practical business men who know that big business could not be carried on without them, advocates of high expenditure on the fighting forces as Empire Insurance, blind resisters of taxation as such, Inflationists, Gold Bugs, High Tories who would have Government authority and interference everywhere, Laissez-faire doctrinaires who would suffer it as nearly as possible nowhere, and Heaven knows how many others, all pulling the Cabinet different ways, paralyzing it and neutralizing one another, whilst the runaway car of Capitalism kept rushing them into new places and dangerous situations all the time.

During the first half of my own lifetime: that is, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Conservative and Liberal parties were much more equally balanced than at present. The

Governments were on their good behavior because their majorities were narrow. The House of Commons was then respected and powerful. With the South African war a period of large majorities set in. Immediately the House of Commons began to fall into something very like contempt in comparison with its previous standing. The majorities were so large that every Government felt that it could do what it liked. That quaint conscience which was invented by English statesmen to keep themselves honest, and called by everybody Public Opinion, was overthrown as an idol, and the ignorance, forgetfulness, and follies of the electorate were traded on cynically until the few thinkers who read the speeches of the political leaders and could remember for longer than a week the pledges and statements they contained, were amazed and scandalized at the audacity with which the people were humbugged. The specific preparations for war with Germany were concealed, and finally, when suspicion became acute, denied; and when at last we floundered into the horror of 1914-18, which left the English Church disgraced, and the great European empires shattered into struggling Republics (the very last thing that the contrivers of the war intended), the world had lost faith in parliamentary government to such an extent that it was suspended and replaced by dictatorship in Italy, Spain, and Russia without provoking any general democratic protest beyond a weary shrug of the shoulders. The old parliamentary democrats were accomplished and endless talkers; but their unreal theory that nothing political must be done until it was understood and demanded by a majority of the people (which meant in effect that nothing political must ever be done at all) had disabled them as men of action; and when casual bodies of impatient and irresponsible proletarian men of action attempted to break up Capitalism without knowing how to do it, or appreciating the nature and necessity of government, a temper spread in which it was possible for Signor Mussolini to be made absolute managing director (Dictator or Duce) of the Italian nation as its savior from parliamentary impotence and democratic indiscipline.

Socialism, however, cannot perish in these political storms and changes. Socialists have courted Democracy, and even called Socialism Social-Democracy to proclaim that the two are inseparable. They might just as plausibly argue that the two are incompatible. Socialism is committed neither way. It faces Cæsars and Soviets, Presidents and Patriarchs, British Cabinets and Italian Dictators or Popes, patrician oligarchs and plebeian demagogues,



with its unshaken demonstration that they cannot have a stable and prosperous State without equality of income. They may plead that such equality is ridiculous. That will not save them from the consequences of inequality. They must equate or perish. The despot who values his head and the crowd that fears for its liberty are equally concerned. I should call Socialism not Democratic but simply Catholic if that name had not been taken in vain so often by so many Churches that nobody would understand me.

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## THE PARTY SYSTEM

OUR Party System does not mean, as many people suppose, that differences of opinion always divide human beings into parties. Such differences existed ages before the Party System was ever dreamt of.

What it means is that our monarchs, instead of choosing whom they please to advise them as Cabinet Ministers in ruling the realm (to form a Government, as we say), must choose them all from whatever party has a majority in the House of Commons, however much they may dislike them or mistrust their ability, or however obvious it may be that a more talented Cabinet could be formed by selecting the ablest men from both parties.

This system carries with it some quaint consequences. Not only must the King appoint to high offices persons whom he may privately regard as disastrous noodles, or whose political and religious principles he may abhor: the ordinary member of Parliament and the common voter are placed in a similar predicament, because every vote given in the House or at a parliamentary election becomes a vote on the question whether the Party in office is to remain there or not. For instance, a Bill is introduced by the Government to allow women to vote at the same age as men, or to put a tax on bachelors, or to institute pensions for widowed mothers, or to build ten more battleships, or to abolish or extend divorce, or to raise the age for compulsory school attendance, or to increase or diminish taxation, or anything else you please. Suppose this Bill is brought in by a Conservative Government, and you are a Conservative member of Parliament! You may think it a most detestable and mischievous Bill. But if you vote against it, and the Bill is thrown out, the Conservative Government will no longer be in a majority; or, as we say, it will no longer possess the confidence of the House. Therefore it must go to the King and resign, whereupon the King will dissolve Parliament; and there

will be a General Election at which you will have to stand again (which will cost you a good deal of money and perhaps end in your defeat) before anything else can be done. Now if you are a good Conservative you always feel that however much you may dislike this Bill or that Bill, yet its passing into law would be a less evil than an overthrow of the Conservative Government, and the possible accession to power of the Labor Party. Therefore you swallow the Bill with a wry face, and vote just as the Government Whips tell you to, flatly against your convictions.

But suppose you are a member of the Labor Party instead, and think the Bill a good one. Then you are in the same fix: you must vote against it and against your convictions, because however good you may think the Bill, you think that a defeat of the Government and a chance for the Labor Party to return to power would be still better. Besides, if the Bill is good, the Labor Party can bring it in again and pass it when Labor wins a majority.

If you are only a voter you are caught in the same cleft stick. It may be plain to you that the candidate of your Party is a political imbecile, a pompous snob, a vulgar ranter, a conceited self-seeker, or anything else that you dislike, and his opponent an honest, intelligent, public-spirited person. No matter, you must vote for the Party candidate, because, if you do not, your Party may be defeated, and the other Party come into power. And, anyhow, however disagreeable your candidate may be personally, when he gets into the House he will have to vote as the Party Whips tell him to; so his personal qualities do not matter.

The advantage of this system is that a House of Commons consisting of about a dozen capable ministers and their opponents: say twenty-five effectives all told, and 590 idiots with just enough intelligence to walk into the lobby pointed out to them by the Whips and give their names at the door, can carry on the government of the country quite smoothly, when 615 independents, with opinions and convictions of their own, voting according to those opinions and convictions, would make party government impossible. It was not, however, on this ground that the party system was introduced, though it has a great deal to do with its maintenance. It was introduced because our Dutch king William the Third, of glorious, pious, and immortal memory, discovered that he could not fight the French king, Louis XIV, *le Roi Soleil*, with a House of Commons refusing him supplies and reducing the army just as each member thought fit. A clever statesman of that time named Robert Spencer, second Earl of Sunderland, pointed out to him

that if he chose his ministers always from the strongest party in the House of Commons, which happened just then to be the Whig party, that party would have to back him through the war and make its followers do the same, just as I have described. King William hated the Whigs, being a strong Tory himself; and he did not like Sunderland's advice. But he took it, and thereby set up the Party System under which we are ruled.

Is there any practicable alternative to the Party System? Suppose, for instance, that there was a general revolt against being compelled to vote for dummies and nincompoops, and that independent candidates became so popular that all party candidates were defeated by them, or, if you think that is going too far, suppose independent candidates returned in such numbers that they could defeat any Government by casting their votes in the House against it, like the old Irish Nationalist Party! Such a revolt already exists and always will exist. The upshot of the General Elections is determined, not by the voters who always vote for their party right or wrong, but by a floating body of independent electors who vote according to their interests and preferences, and often support one party at one election and the opposite party at the next. It is these unattached people who win the odd trick which decides which party shall govern. They either know nothing about the Party System, or snap their fingers at it and vote just as they please. It is probable that they outnumber the party voters, and return party members to Parliament only because, as no others are selected as candidates by the party organizations, there is seldom any independent candidate to vote for.

It is conceivable that the King might someday find himself confronted by a House of Commons in which neither party had a majority, the effective decision resting with members belonging to no party. In that case His Majesty might appeal in vain to the party leaders to form a Government. This situation has occurred several times of late in France, where it has been brought about by the existence in the French Chamber of so many parties that none of them is in a majority; so that a leader can form a Government only by inducing several of these parties to combine for the moment, and thus make what is called a Block. But this is not always easy; and even when it is accomplished, and the Blockmaker forms a Government, it is so hard to keep the Block together that nobody expects it to last for five years, as our party governments do: its lifetime is anything from a week to six months. There have been moments lately in France when we did not know from one day to

another who was Prime Minister there, M. Briand, M. Herriot, M. Painlevé, or M. Poincaré. And what has happened in France may happen here, either through an overwhelming party majority causing the party to split up into hostile groups and thus substitute half a dozen parties, all in a minority, for the two parties which are necessary to the working of the Party System, or through the return of enough independent members to make any Party Government dependent on them. You will therefore be justified if you ask me rather anxiously whether Parliament can not be worked on some other than the Party System.

As a matter of fact in this country we have, beside the House of Commons, parliaments all over the place. We have the great city Corporations, the County Councils, the Borough Councils, the District Councils, and so on down to the Parish meetings in the villages; and not one of them is worked on the Party System. They get on quite well without it. If you mention this, you will be at once contradicted, because on many of these bodies party feeling is intense. The members hold party meetings. The elections are fought on party cries. Votes are taken on party lines, and members of the party which is in the minority are sometimes excluded from the committee chairmanships, which are the nearest things to ministerial offices available, though such exclusion is considered sharp practice if pushed too far. But all this does not involve the Party System any more than a pot of jam and a pound of flour constitute a roly-poly pudding. There is no Prime Minister and no Cabinet. The King does not meddle in the business: he does not send for the most prominent men and ask them to form a Government. There is no Government in the House of Commons sense of the word, though the city or county is nevertheless governed, and often governed with an efficiency which puts the House of Commons to shame. Every member can vote as he thinks best without the slightest risk of throwing his party out of power and bringing on a General Election. If a motion is defeated, nobody resigns: if it is carried, nobody's position is changed. Things are not done in that very puzzling way.

The way they are done is simple enough. The Council is elected for three years; and until the three years are up there can be no general election. Its business is conducted by committees: Public Health Committees, Electric Lighting Committees, Finance Committees, and so forth. These committees meet separately, and set forth their conclusions as to what the Council ought to do in their departments in a series of resolutions. When the whole Council

meets, these strings of resolutions are brought up as the reports of the Committees, and are confirmed or rejected or amended by the general vote. Many of our Labor members of the House of Commons have served their parliamentary apprenticeship on local bodies under this straightforward system.

The two systems, though widely different today, spring from the same root. Before Sunderland prompted William III to introduce the Party System, the King used to appoint committees, which were then all called cabinets, to deal with the different departments of government. These cabinets were committees of his Council; and in this stage they were the model of the municipal committees I have just described. The secretaries of the cabinets, called Secretaries of State, met to concert their activities. The activities thus concerted formed their policy; and they themselves, being all cabinet ministers, came to be called THE Cabinet, after which the word was no longer applied to other bodies. In politics it now means nothing else, the old cabinets being called Offices (Home Office, War Office, Foreign Office, etc.), Boards, Chanceries, Treasuries, or anything except cabinets.

The rigidity of the Party System, as we have seen, depends on the convention that whenever the Government is defeated on a division in the House, it must "appeal to the country": that is, the Cabinet Ministers must resign their offices and the King dissolve the Parliament and have a new one elected. But this leads to such absurd consequences when the question at issue is unimportant and the vote taken when many members are absent, and at all times it reduces the rank and file of the members to such abject voting machines, that if it were carried out to the bitter end members might as well stay at home and vote by proxy on postcards to the Whips, as shareholders do at company meetings. Such slavery is more than even parliamentary flesh and blood, to say nothing of brains, can stand; consequently Governments are forced to allow their followers some freedom by occasionally declaring that the measure under discussion is "not a Party Question", and "taking off the Whips", which means that members may vote as they please without fear of throwing their Party out of office and bringing on a General Election. This practice is bound to grow as members become more independent and therefore more apt to split up into groups. The tendency already is for Governments to resign only when they are defeated on an explicit motion that they possess or have forfeited the confidence of the House, except, of course, when the division is on one of those cardinal points of policy which, if

decided against the Government, would involve an appeal to the country in any case. No doubt the Whips will continue to threaten weak-minded members that the slightest exercise of independence will wreck the Government; and those whose election expenses are paid out of party funds will find that when the Party pays the piper the Whips call the tune; but I think you may take it (in case you should think of going into Parliament) that the House of Commons is becoming less and less like a stage on which an opera chorus huddles round a few haughty soloists, never opening its hundred mouths except to echo these principals and give them time to breathe. It is already evident that the more women there are in the House, the more refractory it will be to the logical extremes of party discipline, and the sooner party questions will become the exceptions and open questions the rule.

Here, however, I must warn you of another possibility. The two Houses of Parliament are as much out of date as instruments for carrying on the public business of a modern community as a pair of horses for drawing an omnibus. In 1920 two famous Socialist professors of political science, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, published a Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain. In that Constitution the notion of going on with our ancient political machinery at Westminster is discarded as impracticable, and its present condition described as one of creeping paralysis. Instead, it is proposed that we should have two parliaments, one political and the other industrial, the political one maintaining the cabinet system, and the industrial one the municipal system. I cannot go into the details of such a change here: you will find them in the book. I mention it just to prepare you for such happenings. Certain it is that if our old Westminster engine is left as it is to cope with the modern developments of Capitalism, Capitalism will burst it; and then something more adequate must be devised and set up, whether we like it or not.

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## DIVISIONS WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY

You now see how essential it is to the working of our parliamentary system, under a Labor or any other Government, that the Cabinet should have a united party behind it, large enough to outvote any other party in the House. You see also that whereas a party only barely large enough to do this is held together by the fear of defeat, a party so large that the whole House belongs to it ceases to be a party at all, and is sure to split up into groups which have to be

combined into blocks of groups before a Cabinet can be formed and government effectively carried on. In the nineteenth century we were all sure that this could never occur. In the twentieth it is as certain as anything of the kind can be that the Proletariat will extend its present invasion of Parliament until it achieves in effect complete conquest. Therefore we had better examine a few questions on which the apparent unanimity in the Labor Party is quite delusive.

To interest you I am tempted to begin with the question of the virtual exclusion of women from certain occupations. This morning I received a letter from the Government College of Lahore in the Punjab which contains the following words: "The number of people in India speaking Urdu of one kind or another is about 96,000,000. Out of this number 46,000,000 are women who are mostly in purdah and do not go out." Now I dare not tell you, even if I knew, how many members of the Labor Party believe that the proper place for women is in purdah. There are enough, anyhow, to start a very pretty fight with those who would remove all artificial distinctions between men and women. But I must pass over this because, vital as it is, it will not split the Labor Party more than it has split the older parties. If men were the chattel slaves of women in law (as some of them are in fact), or women the chattel slaves of men in fact (as married women used to be in law), that would not affect the change from Capitalism to Socialism. Let us confine ourselves to cases that would affect it.

It is fundamental in Socialism that idleness shall not be tolerated on any terms. And it is fundamental in Trade Unionism that the worker shall have the right at any moment to down tools and refuse to do another stroke until his demands are satisfied. It is impossible to imagine a flatter contradiction. And the question of the right to strike is becoming more acute every year. We have seen how the little businesses have grown into big businesses, and the big businesses into Trusts that control whole industries. But the Trade Unions have kept up with this growth. The little unions have grown into big unions; and the big unions have combined into great federations of unions; consequently the little strikes have become terribly big strikes. A modern strike of electricians, a railway strike, or a coal strike can bring these industries, and dozens of others which depend on them, to a dead stop, and cause unbearable inconvenience and distress to the whole nation.

To make strikes more effective, a new sort of Trade Union has developed, called an Industrial Union to distinguish it from the

old Craft Unions. The Craft Union united all the men who lived by a particular craft or trade: the carpenters, the masons, the tanners and so on. But there may be men of a dozen different crafts employed in one modern industry: for instance, the building industry employs carpenters, masons, bricklayers, joiners, plumbers, slaters, painters, and various kinds of laborers, to say nothing of the clerical staffs; and if these are all in separate unions a strike by one of them cannot produce the effect that a strike of all of them would. Therefore unions covering the whole industry without regard to craft (Industrial Unions) have been formed. We now have such bodies as the Transport Workers' Union and the National Union of Railway Workers, in which workers from dozens of different trades are combined. They can paralyse the whole industry by a strike. In the nineteenth century very few strikes or lock-outs were big enough to be much noticed by the general public. In the twentieth there have already been several which were national calamities. The Government has been forced to interfere either by trying to buy the disputants off with subsidies, or to persuade the employers and the strikers to come to some agreement. But as the Government has no power either to force the men to go back to work or the employers to grant their demands, its intervention is not very effective, and never succeeds until a great deal of mischief has been done. It has been driven at last to attempt a limitation of the magnitude of strikes by an Act of 1927 forbidding "sympathetic" strikes and lock-outs, lock-outs being included to give the Act an air of fair play. But as this Act does not forbid the formation of industrial unions, nor take away the right to strike or lock-out when a grievance can be established (as of course it always can), it is only a gesture of impotent rage, useless as a remedy, but significant of the growing indisposition of the nation to tolerate big strikes. They are civil wars between Capital and Labor in which the whole country suffers.

The Socialist remedy for this dangerous nuisance is clear. Socialism would impose compulsory social service on all serviceable citizens, just as during the war compulsory military service was imposed on all men of military age. When we are at war nowadays no man is allowed to plead that he has a thousand a year of his own and need not soldier for a living. It does not matter if he has fifty thousand: he has to "do his bit" with the rest. In vain may he urge that he is a gentleman, and does not want to associate with common soldiers or be classed with them. If he is not a trained officer he has to become a private, and possibly find that his



sergeant has been his valet, and that his lieutenant, his major, his colonel, and his brigadier are respectively his tailor, his boot-maker, his solicitor, and the manager of his favourite golfing hotel. The penalty of neglect to discharge his duties precisely and punctually, even at the imminent risk of being horribly wounded or blown to bits, is death. Now the righteousness of military service is so questionable that the man who conscientiously refuses to perform it can justify himself by the test proposed by the philosopher Kant: that is, he can plead that if everybody did the same the world would be much safer, happier, and better.

A refusal of social service has no such excuse. If everybody refused to work, nine-tenths of the inhabitants of these islands would be dead within a month; and the rest would be too weak to bury them before sharing their fate. It is useless for a lady to plead that she has enough to live on without work: if she is not producing her own food and clothing and lodging other people must be producing them for her; and if she does not perform some equivalent service for them she is robbing them. It is absurd for her to pretend that she is living on the savings of her industrious grandmother; for not only is she alleging a natural impossibility, but there is no reason on earth why she should be allowed to undo by idleness the good that her grandmother did by industry. Compulsory social service is so unanswerably right that the very first duty of a government is to see that everybody works enough to pay her way and leave something over for the profit of the country and the improvement of the world. Yet it is the last duty that any government will face. What governments do at present is to reduce the mass of the people by armed force to a condition in which they must work for the capitalists or starve, leaving the capitalists free from any such obligation, so that capitalists can not only be idle but produce artificial overpopulation by withdrawing labor from productive industry and wasting it in coddling their idleness or ministering to their vanity. This our Capitalist Governments call protecting property and maintaining personal liberty; but Socialists believe that property, in that sense, is theft, and that allowable personal liberty no more includes the right to idle than the right to murder.

Accordingly, we may expect that when a Labor House of Commons is compelled to deal radically with some crushing national strike, the Socialists in the Labor Party will declare that the remedy is Compulsory Social Service for all able-bodied persons. The remnants of the old parties and the non-Socialist Trade Unionists in the Labor Party will at once combine against the proposal, and

clamor for a subsidy to buy off the belligerents instead. Subsidy or no subsidy, the Trade Unionists will refuse to give up the right to strike, even in socialized industries. The strike is the only weapon a Trade Union has. The employers will be equally determined to maintain their right to lock-out. As to the landlords and capitalists, their dismay can be imagined. They will be far more concerned than the employers and financiers, because employers and financiers are workers: to have to work is no hardship to them. But our sort of ladies and gentlemen, who know no trade, and have been brought up to associate productive work with social inferiority, imprisonment in offices and factories, compulsory early rising, poverty, vulgarity, rude manners, roughness and dirt and drudgery, would see in compulsory social service the end of the world for them and their class, as indeed it happily will be, in a sense. The condition of many of them would be so pitiable (or at least they would imagine it to be so) that they would have to be provided with medical certificates of disability until they died out; for, after all, it is not their fault that they have been brought up to be idle, extravagant, and useless; and when that way of life (which, by the way, they often make surprisingly laborious) is abolished, they may reasonably claim the same consideration as other people whose occupation is done away with by law. We can afford to be kind to them.

However that may be, it is certain that the useless classes will join the Trade Unionists in frantic opposition to Compulsory Social Service. If the Labor ministers, being, as they now mostly are, Socialists, attempt to bring in a Compulsory Service Bill, they may be defeated by this combination, in which case there would be a general election on the question; and at this general election the contest would not be between the Labor Party and the Capitalists, but between the Conservative or Trade Unionist wing of the Labor Party, which would be called the Right, and the Socialist wing, which would be called the Left. So that even if the present Conservatives be wiped out of Parliament there may still be two parties contending for power; and the Intelligent Woman may be canvassed to vote Right or Left, or perhaps White or Red, just as she is now canvassed to vote Conservative or Labor.

HOWEVER, two parties would not hurt the House of Commons, as it is worked by the division of the members into two sets, one

carrying on the government and the other continually criticizing it and trying to oust it and become itself the Government. This two-division system is not really a two-party system in the sense that the two divisions represent different policies: they may differ about nothing but the desire for office. From the proletarian point of view the difference between Liberals and Conservatives since 1832 has been a difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. But this did not matter, because the essence of the arrangement is that the Government shall be unsparingly and unceasingly criticized by a rival set of politicians who are determined to pick every possible hole in its proceedings. Government and Opposition might be called Performance and Criticism, the performers and critics changing places whenever the country is convinced that the critics are right and the performers wrong.

The division of the House of Commons into two parties with different policies suits this situation very well. But its division into half a dozen parties would not suit it at all, and might, as we have seen, deadlock parliamentary government altogether. Now there is abundant material for a dozen parties in the British proletariat. Take the subject of religion, inextricably bound up with the parliamentary question of education in public elementary schools. It is unlikely that a Proletarian House of Commons will suffer the nation's children to go on being taught Capitalist and Imperialist morality in the disguise of religion; and yet, the moment the subject is touched, what a hornet's nest is stirred up! Parents are inveterate proselytizers: they take it as a matter of course that they have a right to dictate their children's religion. This right was practically undisputed, unless the parents were professed atheists, when all children who had any schooling went either to Biblical private schools or to public schools and universities where the established religion was the State religion. Nowadays Unitarian schools, Quaker schools, Roman Catholic schools, Methodist schools, Theosophist schools, and even Communist schools may be chosen by parents and guardians (not by the children) to suit their own private religious eccentricities.

But when schooling is made a national industry, and the Government sets up schools all over the country, and imposes daily attendance on the huge majority of children whose parents cannot afford to send their children to any but the State school, a conflict arises over the souls of the children. What religion is to be taught in the State school? The Roman Catholics try to keep their children out of the State school (they must send them to some school or

other) by subscribing money themselves to maintain Roman Catholic schools alongside the State schools; and the other denominations, including the Church of England, do the same. But unless they receive State aid: that is, money provided by taxing and rating all citizens indiscriminately, they cannot afford to take in all the children, or to keep up to a decent standard the schooling of those whom they do take in. And the moment it is proposed to give them money out of the rates and taxes, the trouble begins. Rather than pay rates to be used in making Roman Catholics or even Anglo-Catholics of little English children, Nonconformist Protestant ratepayers will let themselves be haled before the magistrates and allow their furniture to be sold up. They would go to the stake if that were the alternative to paying Peter's Pence to the Scarlet Woman and setting children's feet in the way to eternal damnation. For it is not in Ireland alone that Protestants and Roman Catholics believe each that the other will spend eternity immersed in burning brimstone. Church of England zealots hold that belief even more convincingly about village Dissenters than about Roman Catholics.

The opinions of the parties are so irreconcilable, and the passion of their hostility so fierce, that the Government, when it is once committed to general compulsory education, either directly in its own schools or by subsidies to other schools, finds itself driven to devise some sort of neutral religion that will suit everybody, or else forbid all mention of the subject in school. An example of the first expedient is the Cowper-Temple clause in the Education Act of 1870, which ordains that the Bible shall be read in schools without reference to any creed or catechism peculiar "to any one denomination". The total prohibition expedient is known as Secular Education, and has been tried extensively in Australia.

The Cowper-Temple plan does not meet the case of the Roman Catholics, who do not permit indiscriminate access to the Bible, nor of the Jews, who can hardly be expected to accept the reading of the New Testament as religious instruction. Besides, if the children are to learn anything more than the three Rs, they must be taught Copernican astronomy, electronic physics, and evolution. Now it is not good sense to lead a child at ten o'clock to attach religious importance to the belief that the earth is flat and immovable, and the sky a ceiling above it in which there is a heaven furnished like a king's palace, and, at eleven, that the earth is a sphere spinning on its axis and rushing round the sun in limitless space with a multitude of other spheres. Nor can you reasonably

order that during the religious instruction hour the children are to be informed that all forms of life were created within six days, including the manufacture of a full-grown woman out of a man's rib, and, when the clock strikes, begin explaining that epochs of millions of years were occupied in experiments in the production of various forms of life, from prodigious monsters to invisibly small creatures, culminating in a very complicated and by no means finally satisfactory form called Woman, who specialized a variety of herself, in some respects even less satisfactory, called Man. This would not matter if the teacher might explain that as the astronomy and biology of the Bible are out of date, and we think we know better nowadays, they have been discarded like the barbarous morality of the Israelitish kings and the idol to which they made human sacrifices. But such explanations would frustrate the Cowper-Temple clause, under which the children were to be left to make what they could of the contradictions between their religious and secular instruction. They usually solve it by not thinking about it at all, provided their parents let them alone on the subject, which is not always the case.

As to the alternative of giving no religious instruction, and confining school teaching to what is called Secular or Matter-of-Fact Education, it is not really a possible plan, because children must be taught conduct as well as arithmetic, and the ultimate sanctions of conduct are metaphysical, by which imposing phrase I mean that from the purely matter-of-fact point of view there is no difference between a day's thieving and a day's honest work, between placid ignorance and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, between habitual lying and truth-telling: they are all human activities or inactivities, to be chosen according to their respective pleasantness or material advantages, and not to be preferred on any other grounds. When you find your children acting, as they often do (like their elders), quite secularly, and lying, stealing, or idling, you have to give them either a matter-of-fact or a religious reason for ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. The matter-of-fact reason is temptingly easy to manufacture. You can say "If I catch you doing that again I will clout your head, or smack your behind, or send you to bed without your supper, or injure you in some way or other that you will not like". Unfortunately these secular reasons, though easy to devise and apply, and enjoyable if you have a turn that way, always seem avoidable by cunning concealment and a little additional lying. You know what becomes of the pseudo-morality produced by whipping the moment your

back is turned. And what is your own life worth if it has to be spent spying on your children with a cane in your hand? Hardly worth living, I should say, unless you are one of the people who love caning as others love unnatural sensualities, in which case you may fall into the hands of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which will make short work of your moral pretensions. In any case you will find yourself strongly tempted to whack your children, not really to compel them to conduct themselves for their own good, but to conduct themselves in the manner most convenient to yourself, which is not always nor even often the same thing.

Finally, if you are not selfish and cruel, you will find that you must give the children some reason for behaving well when no one is looking, and there is no danger of being found out, or when they would rather do the forbidden thing at the cost of a whacking than leave it undone with impunity. You may tell them that God is always looking, and will punish them inevitably when they die. But you will find that posthumous penalties are not immediate enough nor real enough to deter a bold child. In the end you must threaten it with some damage to a part of it called its soul, of the existence of which you can give it no physical demonstration whatever. You need not use the word soul: you can put the child "on its honor". But its honor also is an organ which no anatomist has yet succeeded in dissecting out and preserving in a bottle of spirits of wine for the instruction of infants. When it transgresses you can resort to scolding, calling it a naughty, dirty, greedy little thing. Or you may lecture it, telling it solemnly that "it is a sin to steal a pin" and so forth. But if you could find such a monster as an entirely matter-of-fact child, it might receive both scoldings and lectures unmoved, and ask you "What then? What is a sin? What do you mean by naughty, greedy? I understand dirty; but why should I wash my hands if I am quite comfortable with them dirty? I understand greedy; but if I like chocolates why should I give half of them to Jane?" You may retort with "Have you no conscience, child?"; but the matter-of-fact reply is "What is conscience?" Faced with this matter-of-fact scepticism you are driven into pure metaphysics, and must teach your child that conduct is a matter, not of fact, but of religious duty. Good conduct is a respect which you owe to yourself in some mystical way, and people are manageable in proportion to their possession of this self-respect. When you remonstrate with a grown-up person you say "Have you no self-respect?" But somehow one does not say that to an infant. If it

tells a lie, you do not say "You owe it to yourself to speak the truth", because the little animal does not feel any such obligation, though it will later on. If you say "You must not tell lies because if you do nobody will believe what you say", you are conscious of telling a thundering lie yourself, as you know only too well that most lies are quite successful, and that human society would be impossible without a great deal of goodnatureed lying. If you say "You must not tell lies because if you do you will find yourself unable to believe anything that is told to you", you will be much nearer the truth; but it is a truth that a child cannot understand: you might as well tell it the final truth of the matter, which is, that there is a mysterious something in us called a soul, which deliberate wickedness kills, and without which no material gain can make life bearable. How can you expect a naughty child to take that in? If you say "You must not tell a lie because it will grieve your dear parents", the effect will depend on how much the child cares whether its parents are grieved or not. In any case to most young children their parents are as gods, too great to be subject to grief, as long as the parents play up to that conception of them. Also, as it is not easy to be both loved and feared, parents who put on the majesty of gods with their children must not allow the familiarity of affection, and are lucky if their children do not positively hate them. It is safer and more comfortable to invent a parent who is everybody's Big Papa, even Papa's papa, and introduce it to the child as God. And it must be a god that children can imagine. It must not be an abstraction, a principle, a vital impulse, a life force, or the Church of England god who has neither body, parts, nor passions. It must be, like the real papa, a grown-up person in Sunday clothes, very very good, terribly powerful, and all-seeing: that is, able to see what you are doing when nobody is looking. In this way the child who is too young to have a sufficiently developed self-respect and intelligent sense of honor: in short, a conscience, is provided with an artificial, provisional, and to a great extent fictitious conscience which trades it over its nonage until it is old enough to attach a serious meaning to the idea of God.

In this way it was discovered in the nursery, long before Voltaire said it, that "if there were no God it would be necessary to invent Him". After Voltaire's death, the French Revolution threw the government of France into the hands of professional and business gentlemen who had no experience of such work. They began by trying to govern without God, because most of the stories told to children about God were evidently not true, and because the

Church, or rather its ministers, opposed the Revolution. They ended by cutting off one another's heads after trying vainly to cut off everyone else's (on principle), their successors being swept into the dustbin by a military adventurer named Napoleon, who happened to have some common sense. Their chief orator Robespierre stood out strongly for God; but they cut off his head too, after setting up an attractive young lady as a symbol of Liberty in the Temple of Reason, and suggesting that if people wanted to worship something they might as well worship her. But she was a failure, not because she was by way of being a goddess (for Roman Catholic children have a Big Mamma, or Mamma's mamma, who is everybody's mamma, and makes the boys easier to manage, as well as a Big Papa), but because good conduct is not dictated by reason but by a divine instinct that is beyond reason. Reason only discovers the shortest way: it does not discover the destination. It would be quite reasonable for you to pick your neighbor's pocket if you felt sure that you could make a better use of your money than she could; but somehow it would not be honorable; and honor is a part of divinity: it is metaphysics: it is religion. Some day it may become scientific psychology; but psychology is as yet in its crudest infancy; and when it grows up it will very likely be too difficult not only for children but for many adults, like the rest of the more abstruse sciences.

Meanwhile we must bear in mind that our beliefs are continually passing from the metaphysical and legendary into the scientific stage. In China, when an eclipse of the sun occurs, all the intelligent and energetic women rush out of doors with pokers and shovels, trays and saucepan lids, and bang them together to frighten away the demon who is devouring the sun; and the perfect success of this proceeding, which has never been known to fail, proves to them that it is the right thing to do. But you, who know all about eclipses, sit calmly looking at them through bits of smoked glass, because your belief about them is a scientific belief and not a metaphysical one. You probably think that the women who are banging the saucepans in China are fools; but they are not: you would do the same yourself if you lived in a country where astronomy was still in the metaphysical stage.

You must also beware of concluding, because their conduct seems to you ridiculous, and because you know that there is no demon, that there is no eclipse. You may say that nobody could make a mistake like that; but I assure you that a great many people, seeing how many childish fables and ridiculous ceremonies have



been attached to the conception of divinity, have rushed to the conclusion that no such thing as divinity exists. When they grow out of believing that God is an old gentleman with a white beard, they think they have got rid of everything that the old gentleman represented to their infant minds. On the contrary, they have come a little nearer to the truth about it.

Now the English nation consists of many million parents and children of whom hardly any two are in precisely the same stage of belief as to the sanctions of good conduct. Many of the parents are still in the nursery stage: many of the children are in the comparatively scientific stage. Most of them do not bother much about it, and just do what their neighbors do, and say they believe what most of their neighbors say they believe. But those who do bother about it differ very widely and differ very fiercely. Take those who, rejecting the first article of the Church of England, attach to the word God the conception of a Ruler of the universe with the body, parts, and passions of a man, but with unlimited knowledge and power. Here at least, you might think, we have agreement. But no. There are two very distinct parties to this faith. One of them believes in a God of Wrath, imposing good conduct on us by threats of casting us for ever into an inconceivably terrible hell. Others believe in a God of Love, and openly declare that if they could be brought to believe in a God capable of such cruelty as hell implies, they would spit in his face. Others hold that conduct has nothing to do with the matter, and that though hell exists, anyone, however wicked, can avoid it by believing that God accepted the cruel death of his own son as an expiation of their misdeeds, whilst nobody, however virtuous, can avoid it if she has the slightest doubt on this point. Others declare that neither conduct nor belief has anything to do with it, as every person is from birth predestined to fall into hell or mount into heaven when they die, and that nothing that they can say or do or believe or disbelieve can help them. Voltaire described us as a people with thirty religions and only one sauce; and though this was a great compliment to the activity and independence of our minds, it held out no hope of our ever agreeing about religion.

Even if we could confine religious instruction to subjects which are supposed to have passed from the metaphysical to the scientific stage, which is what the advocates of secular education mean, we should be no nearer to unanimity; for not only do our scientific bigots differ as fiercely as those of the sects and churches, and try to obtain powers of ruthless persecution from the Government,

but their pretended advances from the metaphysical to the scientific are often disguised relapses into the pre-metaphysical stage of crude witchcraft, ancient augury, and African "medicine".

Roughly speaking, governments in imposing education on the people have to deal with three fanaticisms: first, that which believes in a God of Wrath, and sees in every earthquake, every pestilence, every war: in short, every calamity of impressive or horrifying magnitude, a proof of God's terrible power and a warning to sinners; second, that which believes in a God of Love in conflict with a Power of Evil personified as the Devil; and third, that of the magicians and their dupes, believing neither in God nor devil, claiming that the pursuit of knowledge is absolutely free from moral law, however atrocious its methods, and pretending to work miracles (called "the marvels of science") by which they hold the keys of life and death, and can make mankind immune from disease if they are given absolute control over our bodies.

A good many women are still so primitive and personal in religious matters that their first impulse on hearing them discussed at all is to declare that their beliefs are the only true beliefs, and must of course be imposed on everyone, all other beliefs to be punished as monstrous blasphemies. They do not regard Jehovah, Allah, Brahma, as different names for God: if they call God Brahma they regard Allah and Jehovah as abominable idols, and all Christians and Moslems as wicked idolaters whom no respectable person would visit. Or if Jehovah, they class Moslems and Indians as "the heathen", and send out missionaries to convert them. But this childish self-conceit would wreck the British Empire if our rulers indulged it. Only about 11 per cent. of British subjects are Christians: the enormous majority of them call God Allah or Brahma, and either do not distinguish Jesus from any other prophet or have never even heard of him. Consequently when a woman goes into Parliament, central or local, she should leave the sectarian part of her religion behind her, and consider only that part of it which is common to all the sects and Churches, however the names may differ. Unfortunately this is about the last thing that most elected persons ever dream of doing. They all strive to impose their local customs, names, institutions, and even languages on the schoolchildren by main force.

Now there is this to be said for their efforts, that all progress consists in imposing on children nobler beliefs and better institutions than those at present inculcated and established. For instance, as every Socialist believes that Communism is more nobly inspired

and better in practice than private property and competition, her object in entering Parliament is to impose that belief on her country by having it taught to the children in the public schools so that they may grow up to regard it as the normal obvious truth, and to abhor Capitalism as a disastrous idolatry. At present she finds herself opposed by statesmen who quite lately spent a hundred millions of English public money in subsidizing military raids on the Russian Government because it was a Socialist Government. To such statesmen, Socialist, Communist, Bolshevik, are synonyms for Scoundrel, Thief, Assassin. In opposition to them the Socialists compare Labor exploited by landlords and capitalists to Christ crucified between two thieves. They both say that we no longer persecute in the name of religion; but this means only that they refuse to call the creeds they are persecuting religions, whilst the beliefs they do call religions have become comparatively indifferent to them. To put down sedition, rebellion, and attacks on property, or, on the other hand, to make an end of the robbery of the poor, suppress shameless idleness, and restore the land of our country, which God made for us all, to the whole people, seems simple enforcement of the moral law, and not persecution; therefore those who do it are not, they think, persecutors, to prove which they point to the fact that they allow us all to go to church or not as we please, and to believe or disbelieve in transubstantiation according to our fancy. Do not be deceived by modern professions of toleration. Women are still what they were when the Tudor sisters sent Protestants to the stake and Jesuits to the rack and gallows; when the defenders of property and slavery in Rome set up crosses along the public roads with the crucified followers of the revolted gladiator slave Spartacus dying horribly upon them in thousands; and when the saintly Torquemada burnt alive every Jew he could lay hands on as piously as he told his beads. The difference between the Socialist versus Capitalist controversy and the Jew versus Christian controversy or the Roman Catholic versus Protestant controversy is not that the modern bigot is any more tolerant or less cruel than her ancestors, nor even that the proletarians are too numerous and the proprietors too powerful to be persecuted. If the controversy between them could be settled by either party exterminating the other, they would both do their worst to settle it in that way. History leaves us no goodnatured illusions on this point. From the wholesale butcheries which followed the suppression of the Paris Commune of 1871 to the monstrous and quite gratuitous persecution of Russians in the United

States of America after the war of 1914-18, in which girls were sentenced to frightful terms of imprisonment for remarks that might have been made by any Sunday School teacher, there is abundant evidence that modern dichards are no better than medieval zealots, and that if they are to be restrained from deluging the world in blood and torture in the old fashion it will not be by any imaginary advance in toleration or in humanity. At this moment (1927) our proprietary classes appear to have no other conception of the Russian Soviet Government and its sympathizers than as vermin to be ruthlessly exterminated; and when the Russian Communist and his western imitators speak of the proprietors and their political supporters as "bourgeois", they make no secret of regarding them as enemies of the human race. The spirit of the famous manifesto of 1792, in which the Duke of Brunswick, in the name of the monarchs of Europe, announced that he meant to exterminate the French Republican Government and deliver up the cities which tolerated it to "military execution and total subversion", is reflected precisely in the speeches made by our own statesmen in support of the projected expedition against the Union of Soviet Republics which was countermanded a few years ago only because the disapproval of the British proletarian voters became so obvious that the preparations for the Capitalist Crusade had to be hastily dropped.

It is therefore very urgently necessary that I should explain to you why it is that a Labor Party can neither establish Socialism by exterminating its opponents, nor its opponents avert Socialism by exterminating the Socialists.

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## REVOLUTIONS

You must first grasp the difference between revolutions and social changes. A revolution transfers political power from one party to another, or one class to another, or even one individual to another, just as a conquest transfers it from one nation or race to another. It can be and often is effected by violence or the threat of violence. Of our two revolutions in the seventeenth century, by which political power in England was transferred from the throne to the House of Commons, the first cost a civil war; and the second was bloodless only because the King ran away. A threat of violence was sufficient to carry the nineteenth century revolution of 1832, by which the political power was transferred from the great agricultural land-owners to the industrial urban employers. The South American

revolutions which substitute one party or one President for another are general elections decided by shooting instead of by voting.

Now the transfer of political power from our capitalists to our proletariat, without which Socialist propaganda would be suppressed by the Government as sedition, and Socialist legislation would be impossible, has already taken place in form. The proletarians can outvote the capitalists overwhelmingly whenever they choose to do so. If on the issue of Socialism versus Capitalism all the proletarians were for Socialism and all the capitalists for Capitalism, Capitalism would have had to capitulate to overwhelming numbers long ago. But the proletarians who live upon the incomes of the capitalists as their servants, their tradesmen, their employees in the luxury trades, their lawyers and doctors and so on, not to mention the troops raised, equipped, and paid by them to defend their property (in America there are private armies of this kind) are more violently Conservative than the capitalists themselves, many of whom, like Robert Owen and William Morris, not to mention myself, have been and are ardent Socialists. The Countess of Warwick is a noted Socialist; so you have seen a Socialist Countess (or at least her picture); but have you ever seen a countess's dressmaker who was a Socialist? If the capitalists refused to accept a parliamentary decision against them, and took to arms, like Charles I, they would have in many places a majority of the proletariat on their side.

If you are shocked by the suggestion that our capitalists would act so unconstitutionally, consider the case of Ireland, in which after thirty years of parliamentary action, and an apparently final settlement of the Home Rule question by Act of Parliament, the establishment of the Irish Free State was effected by fire and slaughter, the winning side being that which succeeded in burning the larger number of the houses of its opponents.

Parliamentary constitutionalism holds good up to a certain point: the point at which the people who are outvoted in Parliament will accept their defeat. But on many questions people feel so strongly, or have such big interests at stake, that they leave the decision to Parliament only as long as they think they will win there. If Parliament decides against them, and they see any chance of a successful resistance, they throw Parliament over and fight it out. During the thirty years of the parliamentary campaign for Irish Home Rule there were always Direct Action men who said "It is useless to go to the English Parliament: the Unionists will never give up their grip of Ireland until they are forced to, and you may as well fight

it out first as last". And these men, though denounced as wanton incendiaries, turned out to be right. The French had to cut off the heads of both king and queen because the king could not control the queen, and the queen would not accept a constitutional revolution, nor stop trying to induce the other kings of Europe to march their armies into France and slaughter the Liberals for her. In England we beheaded our king because he would not keep faith with the Liberal Parliament even after he had fought it and lost. In Spain at this moment the King and the army have suppressed Parliament, and are ruling by force of arms on the basis of divine right, which is exactly what Cromwell did in England after he had cut off King Charles's head for trying to do the same. Signor Mussolini, a Socialist, has overridden parliament in Italy, his followers having established what is called a reign of terror by frank violence.

These repudiations of constitutionalism in Spain and Italy have been made, not to effect any definite social change, but because the Spanish and Italian governments had become so unbearably inefficient that the handiest way to restore public order was for some sufficiently energetic individuals to take the law into their own hands and just break people's heads if they would not behave themselves. And it may quite possibly happen that even if the most perfect set of Fabian Acts of Parliament for the constitutional completion of Socialism in this country be passed through Parliament by duly elected representatives of the people; swallowed with wry faces by the House of Lords; and finally assented to by the King and placed on the statute book, the capitalists may, like Signor Mussolini, denounce Parliament as unpatriotic, pernicious, and corrupt, and try to prevent by force the execution of the Fabian Acts. We should then have a state of civil war, with, no doubt, the Capitalist forces burning the co-operative stores, and the proletarians burning the country houses, as in Ireland, in addition to the usual war routine of devastation and slaughter.

As we have seen, the capitalists would be at no loss for proletarian troops. The war would not be as the Marxist doctrinaires of the Class War seem to imagine. In our examination of the effect of unequal distribution of income we found that it is not only the rich who live on the poor, but also the servants and tradesmen who live on the money the rich spend, and who have their own servants and tradesmen. In the rich suburbs and fashionable central quarters of the great cities, and all over the South of England where pleasant country houses are dotted over the pleasantest of the

English counties, it is as hard to get a Labor candidate into Parliament as in Oxford University. If the unearned incomes of the rich disappeared, places like Bournemouth would either perish like the cities of Nineveh and Babylon, or else the inhabitants would have, as they would put it, to cater for a different class of people; and many of them would be ruined before they could adapt themselves to the new conditions. Add to these the young men who are out of employment, and will fight for anyone who will pay them well for an exciting adventure, with all the people who dread change of any sort, or who are duped by the newspapers into thinking Socialists scoundrels, or who would be too stupid to understand such a book as this if they could be persuaded to read anything but a cheap newspaper; and you will see at once that the line that separates those who live on rich customers from those who live on poor customers: in other words which separates those interested in the maintenance of Capitalism from those interested in its replacement by Socialism, is a line drawn not between rich and poor, capitalist and proletarian, but right down through the middle of the proletariat to the bottom of the very poorest section. In a civil war for the maintenance of Capitalism the capitalists would therefore find masses of supporters in all ranks of the community; and it is their knowledge of this that makes the leaders of the Labor Party so impatient with the extremists who talk of such a war as if it would be a Class War, and echo Shelley's very misleading couplet "Ye are many: they are few". And as the capitalists know it too, being reminded of it by the huge number of votes given for them by the poor at every election, I cannot encourage you to feel too sure that their present denunciations of Direct Action by their opponents mean that when their own sooner-or-later inevitable defeat by Labor in Parliament comes, they will take it lying down.

But no matter how the government of the country may pass from the hands of the capitalists into those of the Socialist proletarians, whether by peaceful parliamentary procedure or the bloodiest conceivable civil war, at the end of it the survivors will be just where they were at the beginning as far as practical Communism is concerned. Returning a majority of Socialists to Parliament will not by itself reconstruct the whole economic system of the country in such a way as to produce equality of income. Still less will burning and destroying buildings or killing several of the opponents of Socialism, and getting several Socialists killed in doing so. You cannot wave a wand over the country and say "Let there be Socialism": at least nothing will happen if you do.

The case of Russia illustrates this. After the great political revolution of 1917 in that country, the Marxist Communists were so completely victorious that they were able to form a Government far more powerful than the Tsar had ever really been. But as the Tsar had not allowed Fabian Societies to be formed in Russia to reduce Socialism to a system of law, this new Russian Government did not know what to do, and, after trying all sorts of amateur experiments which came to nothing more than pretending that there was Communism where there was nothing but the wreck of Capitalism, and giving the land to the peasants, who immediately insisted on making private property of it over again, had to climb down hastily and leave the industry of the country to private employers very much as the great ground landlords of our cities leave the work of the shops to their tenants, besides allowing the peasant farmers to hold their lands and sell their produce just as French peasant proprietors or English farmers do.

This does not mean that the Russian Revolution has been a failure. In Russia it is now established that capital was made for Man, and not Man for Capitalism. The children are taught the Christian morality of Communism instead of the Mammonist morality of Capitalism. The palaces and pleasure seats of the plutocrats are used for the recreation of workers instead of for the enervation of extravagant wasters. Idle ladies and gentlemen are treated with salutary contempt, whilst the workers's blouse is duly honored. The treasures of art, respected and preserved with a cultural conscientiousness which puts to shame our own lootings in China, and our iconoclasm and vandalisms at home, are accessible to everyone. The Greek Church is tolerated (the Bolsheviks forbore to cut off their Archbishop's head as we cut off Archbishop Laud's); but it is not, as the Church of England is, allowed without contradiction to tell little children lies about the Bible under pretence of giving them religious instruction, nor to teach them to reverence the merely rich as their betters. That sort of doctrine is officially and very properly disavowed as Dope.

All this seems to us too good to be true. It places the Soviet Government in the forefront of cultural civilization as far as good intention goes. But it is not Socialism. It still involves sufficient inequality of income to undo in the long run enough of its achievements to degrade the Communist Republic to the level of the old Capitalist Republics of France and America. In short, though it has made one of those transfers of political power which are the object of revolutions, and are forced through by simple slaughter



and terror, and though this political transfer has increased Russian self-respect and changed the moral attitude of the Russian State from pro-Capitalist to anti-Capitalist, it has not yet established as much actual Communism as we have in England, nor even Russian wages to the English level.

The explanation of this is that Communism can spread only as Capitalism spreads: that is, as a development of existing economic civilization and not by a sudden wholesale overthrow of it. What it proposes is not a destruction of the material utilities inherited from Capitalism, but a new way of managing them and distributing the wealth they produce. Now this development of Capitalism into a condition of ripeness for Socialization had not been reached in Russia; consequently the victorious Communist Bolshheviks in 1917 found themselves without any highly organized Capitalistic industry to build upon. They had on their hands an enormous agricultural country with a population of uncivilized peasants, ignorant, illiterate, superstitious, cruel, and land-hungry. The cities, few and far between, with their relatively insignificant industries, often managed by foreigners, and their city proletariats living on family wages of five and threepence a week, were certainly in revolt against the misdistribution of wealth and leisure; but they were so far from being organized to begin Socialism that it was only in a very limited sense that they could be said to have begun urban civilization. There were no Port Sunlights and Bournvilles, no Ford factories in which workmen earn £9 in a five-day week and have their own motor cars, no industrial trusts of national dimensions, no public libraries, no great public departments manned by picked and tested civil servants, no crowds of men skilled in industrial management and secretarial business looking for employment, no nationalized and municipalized services with numerous and competent official staffs, no national insurance, no great Trade Union organization representing many millions of workmen and able to extort subsidies from Capitalist governments by threatening to stop the railways and cut off the coal supply, no fifty years of compulsory schooling supplemented by forty years of incessant propaganda of political science by Fabian and other lecturers, no overwhelming predominance of organized industry over individualist agriculture, no obvious breakdown of Capitalism under the strain of the war, no triumphant rescue by Socialism demonstrating that even those public departments that were by-words for incompetence and red tape were far more efficient than the commercial adventurers who decided them. Well may Mr

Trotsky say that the secret of the completeness of the victory of the Russian Proletarian Revolution over Russian Capitalist civilization was that there was virtually no Capitalist civilization to triumph over, and that the Russian people had been saved from the corruption of bourgeois ideas, not by the famous metaphysical dialectic inherited by Marx from the philosopher Hegel, but by the fact that they are still primitive enough to be incapable of middle class ideas. In England, when Socialism is consummated it will plant the red flag on the summit of an already constructed pyramid; but the Russians have to build right up from the sand. We must build up Capitalism before we can turn it into Socialism. But meanwhile we must learn how to control it instead of letting it demoralize us, slaughter us, and half ruin us, as we have hitherto done in our ignorance.

Thus the fact that the Soviet has had to resort to controlled Capitalism and bourgeois enterprise, after denouncing them so fiercely under the Tsardom in the phrases used by Marx to denounce English Capitalism, does not mean that we shall have to recant in the same way when we complete our transfer of political power from the proprietary classes and their retainers to the Socialist proletariat. The Capitalism which the Russian Government is not only tolerating but encouraging would be for us, even now under Capitalism, an attempt to set back the clock. We could not get back to it if we tried, except by smashing our machinery, breaking up our industrial organization, burning all the plans and documents from which it could be reconstructed, and substituting an eighteenth for a twentieth century population.

The moral of all this is that though a political revolution may be necessary to break the power of the opponents of Socialism if they refuse to accept it as a Parliamentary reform, and resist it violently either by organizing what is now called Fascism or a *coup d'état* to establish a Dictatorship of the Capitalists, yet neither a violent revolution nor a peacefully accepted series of parliamentary reforms can by themselves create Socialism, which is neither a battle cry nor an election catchword, but an elaborate arrangement of our production and distribution of wealth in such a manner that all our incomes shall be equal. This is why Socialists who understand their business are always against bloodshed. They are no milder than other people; but they know that bloodshed cannot do what they want, and that the indiscriminate destruction inseparable from civil war will retard it. Mr Sidney Webb's much quoted and in some quarters much derided "inevitability of

gradualness" is an inexorable fact. It does not, unfortunately, imply inevitability of peacefulness. We can fight over every step of the gradual process if we are foolish enough. We shall come to an armed struggle for political power between the parasitic proletariat and the Socialist proletariat if the Capitalist leaders of the parasitic proletariat throw Parliament and the Constitution over, and declare for a blood and iron settlement instead of a settlement by votes. But at the end of the fighting we shall all be the poorer, none the wiser, and some of us the deader. If the Socialists win, the road to Socialism may be cleared; but the pavement will be torn up and the goal as far off as ever.

All the historical precedents illustrate this. A monarchy may be changed into a republic, or an oligarchy into a democracy, or one oligarchy supplanted by another, if the people who favor the change kill enough of the people who oppose it to intimidate the rest; and when the change is made you may have factions fighting instead of voting for the official posts of power and honor until, as in South America in the nineteenth century, violent revolutions become so common that other countries hardly notice them; but no extremity of fighting and killing can alter the distribution of wealth or the means of producing it. The guillotining of 4000 people in eighteen months during the French Revolution left the people poorer than before; so that when the Public Prosecutor who had sent most of the 4000 to the guillotine was sent there himself, and the people cursed him as he passed to his death, he said, "Will your bread be any cheaper tomorrow, you fools?" That did not affect the Capitalist makers of the French Revolution, because they did not want to make the bread of the poor cheaper: they wanted to transfer the government of France from the King and the nobles to the middle class. But if they had been Socialists, aiming at making everything much cheaper except human life, they would have had to admit that the laugh was with Citizen Fouquier Tinville. And if William Pitt and the kings of Europe had let the French Revolution alone, and it had been as peaceful and parliamentary as our own revolutionary Reform Bill of 1832, it would have been equally futile as far as putting another pennorth of milk into baby's mug was concerned.

Whenever our city proletarians, in the days before the dole (say 1885 for instance), were driven by unemployment to threaten to burn down the houses of the rich, the Socialists said "No: if you are foolish enough to suppose that burning houses will put an end to unemployment, at least have sense enough to burn down your own

houses, most of which are unfit for human habitation. The houses of the rich are good houses, of which we have much too few." Capitalism has produced not only slums but palaces and handsome villas, not only sweaters' dens but first-rate factories, shipyards, steamships, ocean cables, services that are not only national but international, and what not. It has also produced a great deal of Communism, without which it could not exist for a single day (we need not go over all the examples already given: the roads and bridges and so forth). What Socialist in his senses would welcome a civil war that would destroy all or any of this, and leave his party, even if it were victorious, a heritage of blackened ruins and festering cemeteries? Capitalism has led up to Socialism by changing the industries of the country from petty enterprises conducted by petty proprietors into huge Trusts conducted by employed proletarians directing armies of workmen, operating with millions of capital on vast acreages of land. In short, Capitalism tends always to develop industries until they are on the scale of public affairs and ripe for transfer to public hands. To destroy them would be to wreck the prospects of Socialism. Even the proprietors who think that such a transfer would be robbery have at least the consolation of knowing that the thief does not destroy the property of the man he intends to rob, being as much interested in it as the person from whom he means to steal it. As to managing persons, Socialism will need many more of them than there are at present, and will give them much greater security in their jobs and dignity in their social standing than most of them can hope for under Capitalism.

And now I think we may dismiss the question whether the return of a decisive majority of Socialists to Parliament will pass without an appeal to unconstitutional violence by the capitalists and their supporters. Whether it does or not may matter a good deal to those unlucky persons who will lose their possessions or their lives in the struggle if there be a struggle; but when the shouting and the killing and the house burning are over the survivors must settle down to some stable form of government. The mess may have to be cleared up by a dictatorship like that of Napoleon the Third, King Alfonso, Cromwell, Napoleon, Mussolini, or Lenin; but dictatorial strong men soon die or lose their strength, and kings, generals, and proletarian dictators alike find that they cannot carry on for long without councils or parliaments of some sort, and that these will not work unless they are in some way representative of the public, because unless the citizens co-operate with the police the strongest government breaks down, as English government did in Ireland.

In the long run (which nowadays is a very short run) you must have your parliament and your settled constitution back again; and the risings and *coups d'état*, with all their bloodshed and burnings and executions, might as well have been cut out as far as the positive constructive work of Socialism is concerned. So we may just as well ignore all the battles that may or may not be fought, and go on to consider what may happen to the present Labor Party if its present constitutional growth be continued and consummated by the achievement of a decisive Socialist majority in Parliament, and its resumption of office, not, as in 1923-24, by the sufferance of the two Capitalist parties and virtually under their control, but with full power to carry out a proletarian policy, and, if it will, to make Socialism the established constitutional order in Britain.

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## CHANGE MUST BE PARLIAMENTARY

LET us assume, then, that we have resigned ourselves, as we must sooner or later, to a parliamentary settlement of the quarrels between the Capitalists and the Socialists. Mind: I cannot, women and men being what they are, offer you any sincere assurances that this will occur without all the customary devilments. Every possible wrong and wicked way may be tried before their exhaustion drives us back into the right way. Attempts at a general strike—a form of national suicide which sane people are bound to resist by every extremity of violent coercion, may lead to a proclamation of martial law by the Government, whether it be a Labor or a Capitalist Government, followed by slaughtering of mobs, terroristic shelling of cities (as in the case of Dublin), burning and looting of country houses, shooting of police officers at sight as uniformed enemies of the people, and a hectic time for those to whom hating and fighting and killing are a glorious sport that makes life worth living and death worth dying. Or if the modern machine gun, the bombing aeroplane, and the poison gas shell make military coercion irresistible, or if the general strikers have sufficient sense shot into them to see that blockade and boycott are not good tactics for the productive proletariat because they themselves are necessarily the first victims of it, still Parliament may be so split up into contending groups as to become unworkable, forcing the nation to fall back on a dictatorship. The dictator may be another Bismarck ruling in the name of a royal personage, or a forceful individual risen from the ranks like Mahomet or Brigham Young

or Signor Mussolini, or a general like Cæsar or Napoleon or Primo de Rivera.

In the course of these social convulsions you and I may be outraged, shot, gas poisoned, burnt out of house and home, financially ruined, just as anyone else may. We must resign ourselves to such epidemics of human pugnacity and egotism just as we have to resign ourselves to epidemics of measles. Measles are less bitter to us because we have at least never done anything to encourage them, whereas we have recklessly taught our children to glorify pugnacity and to identify gentility and honor with the keeping down of the poor and the keeping up of the rich, thus producing an insanitary condition of public morals which makes periodic epidemics of violence and class hatred inevitable.

But sooner or later, the irreconcilables exterminate one another like the Kilkenny cats; for when the toughest faction has exterminated all the other factions it proceeds to exterminate itself. And the dictators die as Cromwell died, or grow old and are sent to the dustbin by ambitious young monarchs as Bismarck was; and dictators and ambitious monarchs alike find that autocracy is not today a practical form of government except in little tribes like Brigham Young's Latter Day Saints, nor even complete there. The nearest thing to it that will now hold together is the presidency of the United States of America; and the President, autocrat as he is for his four years of office, has to work with a Cabinet, deal with a Congress and a Senate, and abide the result of popular elections. To this parliamentary complexion we must all come at last. Every bumptious idiot thinks himself a born ruler of men; every snob thinks that the common people must be kept in their present place or shot down if society is to be preserved; every proletarian who resents his position wants to strike at something or somebody more vulnerable than the capitalist system in the abstract; but when they have all done their worst the dead they have slain must be buried, the houses they have burned rebuilt, and the hundred other messes they have left cleared up by women and men with sense enough to take counsel together without coming to blows, and business ability enough to organize the work of the community. These sensible ones may not always have been sensible: some of them may have done their full share of mischief before the necessary sanity was branded into them by bitter experience or horrified contemplation of the results of anarchy; but between the naturally sensible people and the chastened ones there will finally be some sort of Parliament to conduct the nation's business, unless indeed

civilization has been so completely wrecked in the preliminary quarrels that there is no nation worth troubling about left, and consequently no national business to transact. That has often happened.

However, let us put all disagreeable possibilities out of our heads for the moment, and consider how Socialism is likely to advance in a Parliament kept in working order by the establishment of two main parties competing for office and power: one professing to resist the advance and the other to further it, but both forced by the need for gaining some sort of control of the runaway car of Capitalism to take many steps when in power which they vehemently denounced when in opposition, and in the long run both contributing about equally (as hitherto) to the redistribution of the national income and the substitution of public for private property in land and industrial organization.

Do not fear that I am about to inflict a complete program on you. Even if I could foresee it I know better than to weary you to that extent. All I intend is to give you a notion of the sort of legislation that is likely to be enacted, and of the sort of opposition it is likely to provoke; so that you may be better able to judge on which side you should vote when an election gives you the chance, or when a seat on some parliamentary body, local or central, calls you to more direct action. You must understand that my designs on you do not include making you what is called a good party woman. Rather do I seek to add you to that floating body of openminded voters who are quite ready to vote for this party today and for the opposite party tomorrow if you think the balance of good sense and practical ability has changed (possibly by the ageing of the leaders) or that your former choice has taken a wrong turn concerning some proposed measure of cardinal importance. Good party people think such openmindedness disloyal; but in politics there should be no loyalty except to the public good. If, however, you prefer to vote for the same side every time through thick and thin, why not find some person who has made the same resolution in support of the opposite party? Then, as they say in Parliament, you can pair with her: that is, you can both agree never to vote at all, which will have the same effect as if you voted opposite ways; and neither of you need ever trouble to vote again.

We are agreed, I take it, that practical Socialism must proceed by the Government nationalizing our industries one at a time by a series of properly compensated expropriations, after an elaborate preparation for their administration by a body of civil servants,

who will consist largely of the old employees, but who will be controlled and financed by Government departments manned by public servants very superior in average ability, training, and social dignity to the commercial profiteers and financial gamblers who now have all our livelihoods at their mercy.

Now this preparation and nationalization will hardly be possible unless the voters have at least a rough notion of what the Government is doing, and approve of it. They may not understand Socialism as a whole; but they can understand nationalization of the coal mines quite well enough to desire it and vote for its advocates, if not for the sake of the welfare of the nation, at least for the sake of getting their coal cheaper. Just so with the railways and transport services generally: the most prejudiced Conservatives may vote for their nationalization on its merits as an isolated measure, for the sake of cheaper travelling and reasonable freights for internal produce. A few big nationalizations effected with this sort of popular support will make nationalization as normal a part of our social policy as old age pensions are now, though it seems only the other day that such pensions were denounced as rank Communism, which indeed they are.

There is therefore no hope for Capitalism in the difficulty that baffled the Soviet in dealing with the land: that is, that the Russian people were not Communists, and would not work the Communist system except under a compulsion which it was impossible to apply on a sufficiently large scale, because if a system can be maintained only by half the able-bodied persons in the country being paid to do nothing but stand over the other half, rifle in hand, then it is not a practicable system, and may as well be dropped first as last. But a series of properly prepared nationalizations may not only be understood and voted for by people who would be quite shocked if they were called Socialists, but would fit in perfectly with the habits of the masses who take their bread as it comes and never think about anything of a public nature. To them the change would be only a change of masters, to which they are so accustomed that it would not strike them as a change at all, whilst it would be also a change in the remuneration, dignity, and certainty of employment, which is just what they are always clamoring for. This overcomes the difficulty, familiar to all reformers, that it is much easier to induce people to do things in the way to which they are accustomed, even though it is detestably bad for them, than to try a new system, even though it promises to be millennially good for them.

Socialistic legislation, then, will be no mere matter of forbidding



people to be rich, and calling a policeman when the law is broken. It means an active interference in the production and distribution of the nation's income; and every step of it will require a new department or extension of the civil service or the municipal service to execute and manage it. If we had sense enough to make a law that every baby, destitute or not, should have plenty of bread and milk and a good house to shelter it, that law would remain a dead letter until all the necessary bakeries and dairies and builders' yards were ready. If we made a law that every able-bodied adult should put in a day's work for his or her country every day, we could not carry out that law until we had a job ready for everybody. All constructive and productive legislation is quite different from the Ten Commandments: it means the employment of masses of men, the establishing of offices and works, the provision of large sums of money to start with, and the services of persons of special ability to direct. Without these, all the Royal or Dictatorial Proclamations, all the Commandments, and all the Communist Manifestoes are waste paper as far as the establishment of practical Socialism is concerned.

You may therefore take it that the change from inequality to equality of income, though it will be made by law and cannot be made in any other way, will not be made by simply passing a single Act of Parliament ordering everybody to have the same income, with arithmetical exactness in every case. Dozens of extensions of the civil and municipal services, dozens of successive nationalizations, dozens of annual budgets, all warmly contested on one ground or another, will take us nearer and nearer to Equality of Income until we are so close that the evil of such trifling inequalities as may be left is no longer serious enough to be worth bothering about. At present, when one baby has a hundred thousand a year, and a hundred other babies are dying of insufficient nourishment, equality of income is something to be fought for and died for if necessary. But if every baby had its ill, the fact that here and there a baby's father or mother might get hold of an extra five shillings or five pounds would not matter enough to induce anyone to cross the street to prevent it.

All social reforms stop short, not at absolute logical completeness or arithmetical exactness, but at the point at which they have done their work sufficiently. To a poor woman the difference between a pound a week and a guinea a week is very serious, because a shilling is a large sum of money to her. But a woman with twenty pounds a week would not engage in a civil war because some other

woman had twenty guineas. She would not feel the difference. Therefore we need not imagine a state of society in which we should call the police if somebody made a little extra money by singing songs or selling prize chrysanthemums, though we might come to consider such conduct so sordidly unladylike that even the most impudent woman would not dare do it openly. As long as we were all equally well off, so that anybody's daughter could marry anybody else's son without any question of marrying above or beneath her, we should be contented enough not to haggle over halfpence in the division of the national income. For all that, equality of income should remain a fundamental principle, any noticeable departure from which would be jealously watched, and tolerated, if at all, with open eyes. There are no limits to the possibility of its enforcement.

This does not mean that there are no limits to any device of Socialism: for example, to the process of nationalizing industry and turning private employees into Government employees. We could not nationalize everything even if we went mad on nationalization and wanted to. There will never be a week in which the Sunday papers will report that Socialism was established in Great Britain last Wednesday, on which occasion the Queen wore a red silk scarf fastened on the shoulder with a circlet of rubies consecrated and presented to her by the Third International, and containing a portrait of Karl Marx with the famous motto, "Proletarians of All Lands: Unite". It is far more likely that by the time nationalization has become the rule, and private enterprise the exception, Socialism (which is really rather a bad name for the business) will be spoken of, if at all, as a crazy religion held by a fanatical sect in that darkest of dark ages, the nineteenth century. Already, indeed, I am told that Socialism has had its day, and that the sooner we stop talking nonsense about it and set to work, like the practical people we are, to nationalize the coal mines and complete a national electrification scheme, the better. And I, who said forty years ago that we should have had Socialism already but for the Socialists, am quite willing to drop the name if dropping it will help me to get the thing.

What I meant by my jibe at the Socialists of the eighteen-eighties was that nothing is ever done, and much is prevented, by people who do not realize that they cannot do everything at once.

## SUBSIDIZED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

WHILST we are nationalizing the big industries and the wholesale businesses we may have to leave a good many unofficial retailers to carry on the work of petty distribution much as they do at present, except that we may control them in the matter of prices as the Trusts do, whilst allowing them a better living than the landlords and capitalists allow them, and relieving them from the continual fear of bankruptcy inseparable from the present system. We shall nationalize the mines long before we nationalize the village smithy and make the village blacksmith a public official. We shall have national or municipal supplies of electric power laid on from house to house long before we meddle with the individual artists and craftsmen and scientific workers who will use that power, to say nothing of the housemaids who handle the vacuum cleaners. We shall nationalize land and large-scale farming without simultaneously touching fancy fruit farming and kitchen gardening. Long after Capitalism as we know it shall have passed away more completely than feudalism has yet passed away there may be more men and women working privately in businesses of their own than there ever can be under our present slavish conditions.

The nationalization of banking will make it quite easy for private businesses to be carried on under Socialism; to any extent that may be found convenient, and will in fact stimulate them vigorously. The reduction of the incomes derived from them to the common level could be effected by taxing them if they were excessive. But the difficulty is more likely to be the other way: that is, the people in the private businesses might find themselves, as most of them do at present, poorer than they would be in public employment. The immense fortunes that are made in private businesses to-day are made by the employment of workers who, as they cannot live without access to the products of land and capital, must either starve or consent to work for the landlords and capitalists for much less than their work creates. But when everybody could get a job in one of the nationalized industries, and receive an income which would include his or her share of the rent of the nationalized land, and the interest on the nationalized capital, no private employer could induce anyone to come and work for wages unless the wages were big enough to be equivalent to the advantages of such public employment; therefore private employment could not create poverty, and would in fact become bankrupt unless the employers

were either clever and useful enough to induce the public to pay them handsomely for their products or services, or else were content, for the sake of doing things in their own way, to put up with less than they could make in some national establishment round the corner. To maintain their incomes at the national level some of them might actually demand and receive subsidies from the Government. To take a very simple instance: in an out-of-the-way village or valley, where there was not enough business to pay a carrier, the Government or local authority might find that the most economical and sensible plan was to pay a local farmer or shopkeeper or innkeeper a contribution towards the cost of keeping a motor lorry on condition that he undertook the carrying for the district.

In big business, as we have seen, this process has actually begun. When Trade Unionism forced up the wages of the coal miners to a point at which the worst coal mines could not afford to continue working, the owners, though devout opponents of Socialism, demanded and obtained from a Conservative Government a subsidy of £10,000,000 to enable them to make both ends meet. But it was too ridiculous to tax the general public to keep a few bad mines going, and incidentally to keep up the monstrous prices charged for coal, when the mines as a whole were perfectly well able to pay a decent living wage, which was all the Trade Unions asked for. The subsidy was stopped, and a terrific lock out ensued. All this could have been prevented by nationalizing the coal mines and thus making it possible to keep up wages and reduce the price of coals to the public simultaneously. However, that is not our point at present. What comes in here is that the capitalists themselves have established the Socialistic practice of subsidizing private businesses when they do not yield sufficient profit to support those engaged in them, though they are too useful to be dispensed with. The novelty, by the way, is only in subsidizing common industries. Scientific research, education, religion, popular access to rare books and pictures, exploration, carriage of mail overseas, and the like are partly dependent on Government grants, which are subsidies under another name.

What is more, capitalists are now openly demanding subsidies to enable them to start their private enterprises. The aeroplane lines, for instance, boldly took it as a matter of course that the Government should help them, just as it had helped the dye industry during the war (and been sorry for it afterwards). I draw your attention specially to this new capitalistic method because by it

you are not only invited to throw over the Capitalist principle of trusting to unaided competitive private enterprise for the maintenance of our industries, but taxed to take all the risks of it whilst the capitalists take all the profits and keep prices as high as possible against you, thus fleecing you both ways. They cannot consistently object (though they do object) when workmen ask the Government to guarantee them a living wage as well as guaranteeing profits and keeping up prices for their employers.

When Socialism is the order of the day these capitalistic exploitations of the taxpayer will have provided plenty of precedents for subsidizing experimental private ventures in new industries or inventions and new methods, or, as in the case of the village carrier, making it worth somebody's while to undertake some necessary service that is not for the moment worth nationalizing. In fact this will be the most interesting part of Socialism to clever business people. Direct and complete nationalizations will be confined mostly to well established routine services.

There are doctrinaire Socialists who will be shocked at the suggestion that a Socialist Government should not only tolerate private enterprise, but actually finance it. But the business of Socialist rulers is not to suppress private enterprise as such, but to attain and maintain equality of income. The substitution of public for private enterprise is only one of several means to that end, and if in any particular instance the end can be best served for the moment by private enterprise a Socialist Government will tolerate private enterprise, or subsidize private enterprise, or even initiate private enterprise. Indeed Socialism will be more elastic and tolerant than Capitalism, which would leave any district without a carrier if no private carrier could make it pay.

Note, however, that when a private experiment in business has been financed by the State, and has been successful in establishing some new industry or method or invention as part of the routine of national production and service, it will then be nationalized, leaving private enterprise to return to its proper business of making fresh experiments and discovering new services, instead of, as at present, wallowing in the profits of industries which are no longer experimental. For example, it has for many years past been silly to leave railways in the hands of private companies instead of nationalizing them, especially as the most hidebound bureaucrat could not have been more absolutely reactionary, uninventive, and obstructive than some of our most pretentious railway chairmen have been. Everything is known about railway locomotion that

need be known for nationalization purposes. But the flying services are still experimenting, and may be treated as State-aided private enterprises until their practice becomes as well established and uniform as railway practice.

Unfortunately this is so little understood that the capitalists, through their agents the employers and financiers, are now persuading our Conservative governments into financing them at the taxpayers' expense without retaining the taxpayers' interest in the venture. For instance, the £10,000,000 subsidy to the coal owners should clearly have been given by way of mortgage on the mines. For every £100 granted to private enterprise the Government should demand a share certificate. Otherwise, if and when it subsequently nationalizes the enterprise, it will be asked to compensate the proprietors for the confiscation of its own capital; and though this, as we have seen in our study of compensation, does not really matter, it does matter very seriously that the State should not have at least a shareholder's control. To make private adventurers an unconditional present of public money is to loot the Treasury and plunder the taxpayer.

So, you see, the difference between Capitalist and Socialist governments is not as to whether nationalization should be tolerated; for neither could get on for a day without it: the difference is as to how far it should be carried and how fast pushed. Capitalist governments regard nationalization and municipalization as evils to be confined to commercially unprofitable works; so as to leave everything profitable to the profiteers. When they acquire land for some temporary public purpose, they sell it to a private person when they have done with it, and use the price to reduce the income tax. Thereby a piece of land which was national property becomes private property; and the unearned incomes of the income tax payers are increased by the relief from taxation. Socialist governments, on the other hand, push the purchase of land for the nation at the expense of the capitalists as hard and as fast as they can, and oppose its resale to private individuals fiercely. But they are often held back and even thrown back, just as the Russian Soviet was, by the inexorable necessity for keeping land and capital in constant and energetic use. If the Government takes an acre of fertile land or a ton of spare subsistence (capital) that it is not prepared instantly to cultivate or feed productive labor with, then, whether it likes or not, it must sell it back again into private hands and thus retrace the step towards Socialism which it took without being sufficiently prepared for it. During the war, when private enterprise

broke down hopelessly, and caused an appalling slaughter of our young soldiers in Flanders by leaving the army without shells, the munitions had to be made in national factories. When the war was over the Capitalist Government of 1918 sold off these factories as fast as it possibly could for an old song, in spite of the protests of the Labor Party. Some of the factories were unsaleable, either because they were in such out-of-the-way places (lest they should be bombarded) that private enterprise thought it could do better elsewhere, or because private enterprise was so wretchedly unenterprising. Yet when a Labor Government took office it, too, had to try to sell these remaining war factories because it could not organize enough new public enterprises to employ them for peace purposes.

This was another object lesson in the impossibility of taking over land from the landlords and capital from the capitalists merely because doing so is Socialistic, without being ready to employ it productively. If you do, you will have to give it back again, as the Moscow Soviet had. You must take it only when you have some immediate use for it, and are ready to start on the job next morning. If a Capitalist Government were forced by a wave of successful Socialist propaganda to confiscate more property than it could administer, it might quite easily be forced to reissue it (not at all unwillingly) and with triumphant cries of "I told you so" to private enterprise on much worse terms for the nation than those on which it is held at present.

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## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

There is no limit to the rate at which the change can take place. If it be put off too long, or brought about too slowly, there may be a violent revolution which may produce a dismal equality by murdering everybody who is not murdered. But equality produced in that way does not last. Only in a settled and highly civilized society with a strong Government and an elaborate code of laws can equality of income be attained or maintained. Now a strong Government is not one with overwhelming fighting forces at its disposal; that is rather the mark of a despotic Government. It is one that commands the moral approval of an overwhelming majority of the people. To put it more particularly, it is one in which the police and the other executive officers of the Government can always count on the sympathy and, when they need it, the co-operation of the citizens. A morally shaky Government cannot last, and cannot carry out such changes as the change from our present system to Socialism,

which are matters of long business arrangements and extensions of the Civil Service. They must be made thoughtfully, bit by bit; and they must be popular enough to establish themselves too solidly for changes of Government to shake them, like our postal system or our Communism in roads, bridges, police, drainage, and highway lighting.

It is a great pity that the change cannot be made more quickly, but we must remember that when Moses delivered the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, he found them so unfitted for freedom, that he had to keep them wandering round the desert for forty years, until those who had been in bondage in Egypt were mostly dead. The trouble was not the distance from Egypt to the Promised Land, which was easily walkable in forty weeks, but the change of condition, and habit, and mind, and the reluctance of those who had been safe and well treated as slaves to face danger and hardship as free adventurers. We should have the same trouble if we attempted to impose Socialism all in a lump on people not brought up to it. They would wreck it because they could not understand it nor work its institutions, and some of them would just hate it. The truth is, we are at present wandering in the desert between the old Commercialism and the new Socialism. Our industries and our characters and our laws and our religions are partly commercialized, partly nationalized, partly municipalized, partly communized, and the completion of the change will take place like the beginning of it—that is, without the unintelligent woman knowing what is happening, or noticing anything except that some ways of life are getting harder and some easier, with the corresponding exclamations about not knowing what the world is coming to, or that things are much better than they used to be. Mark Twain said “it is never too late to mend: there is no hurry”; and those who dread the change may comfort themselves by the assurance that there is more danger of its coming too slowly than too quickly, even though the more sloth the more suffering. It is well that we who are hopelessly unfitted for Socialism by our bringing-up will not live for ever. If only it were possible for us to cease corrupting our children our political superstitions and prejudices would die with us, and the next generation might bring down the walls of Jericho. Fortunately, the advantages to be reaped by Socialism for the proletariat, and the fact that proletarian parents are a huge majority of the electorate, may be depended on to bias moral education more and more in favor of the movement towards Socialism.



I purposely avoid anticipating any moral pressure of public opinion against economic selfishness. No doubt that will become part of the national conscience under Socialism, just as under Capitalism children are educated to regard success in life as meaning more money than anyone else and no work to do for it. But I know how hard it is for you to believe that public opinion could change so completely. You may have observed that at present, although people do not always choose the occupation at which they can make the most money, and indeed will give up lucrative jobs to starve at more congenial ones, yet, when they have chosen their job, they will take as much as they can get for it; and the more they can get the better they are thought of. So I have assumed that they will continue to do so as far as they are allowed (few of them have any real liberty of this kind now), though I can quite conceive that in a Socialist future any attempt to obtain an economic advantage over one's neighbors, as distinguished from an economic advantage for the whole community, might come to be considered such exceedingly bad form that nobody could make it without losing her place in society just as a detected card-sharper does at present.

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## SOCIALISM AND LIBERTY

THE dread of Socialism by nervous people who do not understand it, on the ground that there would be too much law under it, and that every act of our lives would be regulated by the police, is more plausible than the terrors of the ignorant people who think it would mean the end of all law, because under Capitalism we have been forced to impose restrictions that in a socialized nation would have no sense, in order to save the proletariat from extermination, or at least from extremities that would have provoked it to rebellion. Here is a little example. A friend of mine who employed some girls in an artistic business in which there was not competition enough to compel him to do his worst in the way of sweating them, took a nice old riverside house, and decorated it very prettily with Morris wall-papers, furnishing it in such a way that the girls could have their tea comfortably in their workrooms, which he made as homelike as possible. All went well until one day a gentleman walked in and announced himself to my friend as the factory inspector. He looked round him, evidently much puzzled, and asked where the women worked. "Here" replied my friend, with justifiable pride, confident that the inspector had never seen any-

thing so creditable in the way of a factory before. But what the inspector said was "Where is the copy of the factory regulations which you are obliged by law to post up on your walls in full view of your employees?" "Surely you dont expect me to stick up a beastly ugly thing like that in a room furnished like a drawing room" said my friend. "Why, that paper on the wall is a Morris paper: I cant disfigure it by pasting up a big placard on it." "You are liable to severe penalties" replied the inspector "for having not only omitted to post the regulations, but for putting paper on your walls instead of having them limewashed at the intervals prescribed by law." "But hang it all!" my friend remonstrated, "I want to make the place homely and beautiful. You forget that the girls are not always working. They take their tea here." "For allowing your employees to take their meals in the room where they work you have incurred an additional penalty" said the inspector. "It is a gross breach of the Factory Acts." And he walked out, leaving my friend an abashed criminal caught redhanded.

As it happened, the inspector was a man of sense. He did not return; the penalties were not exacted; the Morris wall-papers remained; and the illicit teas continued; but the incident illustrates the extent to which individual liberty has been cut down under Capitalism for good as well as for evil. Where women are concerned it is assumed that they must be protected to a degree that is unnecessary for men (as if men were any more free in a factory than women); consequently the regulations are so much stricter that women are often kept out of employments to which men are welcomed. Besides the factory inspector there are the Commissioners of Inland Revenue inquiring into your income and making you disgorge a lot of it, the school attendance visitors taking possession of your children, the local government inspectors making you build and drain your house not as you please but as they order, the Poor Law officers, the unemployment insurance officers, the vaccination officers, and others whom I cannot think of just at present. And the tendency is to have more and more of them as we become less tolerant of the abuses of our capitalist system. But if you study these interferences with our liberties closely you will find that in practice they are virtually suspended in the case of people well enough off to be able to take care of themselves: for instance, the school attendance officer never calls at houses valued above a certain figure, though the education of the children in them is often disgracefully neglected or mishandled. Poor Law officers would not exist if there were no poor, nor unemployment insurance

officers if we all got incomes whether we were employed or not. If nobody could make profits by sweating, nor compel us to work in uncomfortable, unsanitary factories and workshops, a great deal of our factory regulations would become not only superfluous but unbearably obstructive.

Then consider the police—the friends of the honest woman and the enemies and hunters of thieves, tramps, swindlers, rioters, confidence tricksters, drunkards, and prostitutes. The police officer, like the soldier who stands behind him, is mainly occupied today in enforcing the legalized robbery of the poor which takes place whenever the wealth produced by the labor of a productive worker is transferred as rent or interest to the pockets of an idler or an idler's parasite. They are even given powers to arrest us for "sleeping out", which means sleeping in the open air without paying a landlord for permission to do so. Get rid of this part of their duties, and at the same time of the poverty which it enforces, with the mass of corruption, thieving, roting, swindling and prostitution which poverty produces as surely as insinitry squallor produces smallpox and typhus—and you get rid of the least agreeable part of our present police activity, with all that it involves in prisons, criminal courts, and jury duties.

By getting rid of poverty we shall get rid of the unhappiness and worry which it causes. To defend themselves against this, women, like men, resort to artificial happiness, just as they resort to artificial insensibility when they have to undergo a painful operation. Alcohol produces artificial happiness, artificial courage, artificial gaiety, artificial self-satisfaction, thus making life bearable for millions who would otherwise be unable to endure their condition. To them alcohol is a blessing. Unfortunately, as it acts by destroying conscience, self-control, and the normal functioning of the body, it produces crime, disease, and degradation on such a scale that its manufacture and sale are at present prohibited by law throughout the United States of America, and there is a strong movement to introduce the same prohibition here.

The ferocity of the resistance to this attempt to abolish artificial happiness shows how indispensable it has become under Capitalism. A famous American Prohibitionist was mobbed by medical students in broad daylight in the streets of London, and barely escaped with the loss of one eye, and his back all but broken. If he had been equally famous for anything else, the United States Government would have insisted on the most ample reparation, apology, and conditional punishment of his assailants—and if this had

been withheld, or even grudged, American hotheads would have clamored for war. But for the enemy of the anæsthetic that makes the misery of the poor and the idleness of the rich tolerable, turning it into a fuddled dream of enjoyment, neither his own country nor the public conscience of ours could be moved even to the extent of a mild censure on the police. It was evident that had he been torn limb from limb the popular verdict would have been that it served him jolly well right.

Alcohol, however, is a very mild drug compared with the most effective modern happiness producers. These give you no mere sodden self-satisfaction and self-conceit; they give you ecstasy. It is followed by hideous wretchedness; but then you can cure that by taking more and more of the drug until you become a living horror to all about you, after which you become a dead one, to their great relief. As to these drugs, not even a mob of medical students, expressly educated to make their living by trading in artificial health and happiness, dares protest against strenuous prohibition, provided they may still prescribe the drug; nevertheless the demand is so great in the classes who have too much money and too little work that smuggling, which is easy and very profitable, goes on in spite of the heaviest penalties. Our efforts to suppress this trade in artificial happiness has already landed us in such interferences with personal liberty that we are not allowed to purchase many useful drugs for entirely innocent purposes unless we first pay (not to say bribe) a doctor to prescribe it.

Still, prohibition of the fiercer drugs has the support of public opinion. It is the prohibition of alcohol that rouses such opposition that the strongest governments shrink from it in spite of overwhelming evidence of the increase in material well-being produced by it wherever it has been risked. You prove to people that as teetotallers they will dwell in their own houses instead of in a frowsy tenement, besides keeping their own motor car, having a bank account, and living ten years longer. They angrily deny it; but when you crush their denials by unquestionable American statistics they tell you flatly that they had rather be happy for thirty years in a tenement without a car or a penny to put in the bank than be unhappy for forty years with all these things. You find a wife distracted because her husband drinks and is ruining her and her children; yet when you induce him to take the pledge, you find presently that she has tempted him to drink again because he is so morose when he is sober that she cannot endure living with him. And to make his drunkenness bearable she takes to drink herself,

and lives happily in shameless degradation with him until they both drink themselves dead.

Besides, the vast majority of modern drinkers do not feel any the worse for it, because they do not miss the extra efficiency they would enjoy on the water waggon. Very few people are obliged by their occupations to work up to the extreme limit of their powers. Who cares whether a lady gardener or a bookkeeper or a typist or a shop assistant is a teetotaler or not, provided she always stops well short of being noticeably drunk? It is to the motorist or the aeroplane pilot that a single glass of any intoxicant may make the difference between life and death. What would be sobriety for a billiard marker would be ruinous drunkenness for a professional billiard player. The glass of stimulant that enlivens a routine job is often dropped because when the routinier plays golf "to keep herself fit" she finds that it spoils her putting. Thus you find that you can sometimes make a worker give up alcohol partly or wholly by giving her more leisure. She finds that a woman who is sober enough to do her work as well as it need be done is not sober enough to play as well as she would like to do it. The moment people are in a position to develop their fitness, as they call it, to the utmost, whether at work or at play, they begin to grudge the sacrifice of the last inch of efficiency which alcohol knocks off, and which in all really fine work makes the difference between first rate and second rate. If this book owed any of its quality to alcohol or to any other drug, it might amuse you more, but it would be enormously less conscientious intellectually, and therefore much more dangerous to your mind.

If you put all this together you will see that any social change which abolishes poverty and increases the leisure of routine workers will destroy the need for artificial happiness, and increase the opportunities for the sort of activity that makes people very jealous of reducing their fitness by stimulants. I even now we admit that the champion athlete must not drink whilst training, and the nearer we get to a world in which everyone is in training all the time the nearer we shall get to general teetotalism, and to the possibility of discarding all those restrictions on personal liberty which the prevalent dearth of happiness and consequent resort to pernicious artificial substitutes now force us to impose.

As to such serious personal outrages as compulsory vaccination and the monstrous series of dangerous inoculations which are forced on soldiers, and at some frontiers on immigrants, they are only desperate attempts to stave off the consequences of bad

sanitation and overcrowding by infecting people with disease when they are well and strong in the hope of developing their natural resistance to it by exercise sufficiently to prevent them from catching it when they are ailing and weak. The poverty of our doctors forces them to support such practices in the teeth of all experience and disinterested science; but if we get rid of poor doctors and overcrowded and insanitary dwellings we get rid of the diseases which terrify us into these grotesque witch rituals; and no woman will be forced to expose her infant to the risk of a horrible, lingering, hideously disfiguring death from generalized vaccinia lest it should catch confluent smallpox, which, by the way, is, on a choice between the two evils, much to be preferred. Dread of epidemics: that is, of disease and premature death, has created a pseudo-scientific tyranny just as the dread of hell created a priestly tyranny in the ages of faith. Florence Nightingale, a sensible woman whom the doctors could neither humbug nor bully, told them that what was wrong with our soldiers was dirt, bad food, and foul water: in short, the conditions produced by war in the field and poverty in the slum. When we get rid of poverty the doctors will no longer be able to frighten us into imposing on ourselves by law pathogenic inoculations which, under healthy conditions, kill more people than the diseases against which they pretend to protect them. And when we get rid of Commercialism, and vaccines no longer make dividends for capitalists, the fairy tales by which they are advertized will drop out of the papers, and be replaced, let us hope, by disinterested attempts to ascertain and publish the scientific truth about them, which, by the way, promises to be much more hopeful and interesting.

As to the mass of oppressive and unjust laws that protect property at the expense of humanity, and enable proprietors to drive whole populations off the land because sheep or deer are more profitable, we have said enough about them already. Naturally we shall get rid of them when we get rid of private property.

Now, however, I must come to one respect in which official interference with personal liberty would be carried under Socialism to lengths undreamed of at present. We may be as idle as we please if only we have money in our pockets; and the more we look as if we had never done a day's work in our lives and never intend to, the more we are respected by every official we come in contact with, and the more we are envied, courted, and deferred to by everybody. If we enter a village school the children all rise and stand respectfully to receive us, whereas the entrance of a plumber or carpenter

leaves them unmoved. The mother who secures a rich idler as a husband for her daughter is proud of it: the father who makes a million uses it to make rich idlers of his children. That work is a curse is part of our religion: that it is a disgrace is the first article in our social code. To carry a parcel through the streets is not only a trouble, but a derogation from one's rank. Where there are blacks to carry them, as in South Africa, it is virtually impossible for a white to be seen doing such a thing. In London we condemn these colonial extremes of snobbery; but how many ladies could we persuade to carry a jug of milk down Bond Street on a May afternoon, even for a bet?

Now it is not likely, human laziness being what it is, that under Socialism anyone will carry a parcel or a jug if she can induce somebody else (her husband, say) to carry it for her. But nobody will think it disgraceful to carry a parcel because carrying a parcel is work. The idler will be treated not only as a rogue and a vagabond, but as an embezzler of the national funds, the meanest sort of thief. The police will not have much trouble in detecting such offenders. They will be denounced by everybody, because there will be a very marked jealousy of slackers who take their share without "doing their bit". The real lady will be the woman who does more than her bit, and thereby leaves her country richer than she found it. Today nobody knows what a real lady is; but the dignity is assumed most confidently by the women who ostentatiously take as much and give as nearly nothing as they can.

The snobbery that exists at present among workers will also disappear. Our ridiculous social distinctions between manual labor and brain work, between wholesale business and retail business, are really class distinctions. If a doctor considers it beneath his dignity to carry a scuttle of coals from one room to another, but is proud of his skill in performing some unpleasantly messy operation, it is clearly not because the one is any more or less manual than the other, but solely because surgical operations are associated with descent through younger sons from the propertied class, and carrying coals with proletarian descent. If the petty ironmonger's daughter is not considered eligible for marriage with the ironmaster's son, it is not because selling steel by the ounce and selling it by the ton are attributes of two different species, but because petty ironmongers have usually been poor and ironmasters rich. When there are no rich and no poor, and descent from the proprietary class will be described as "criminal antecedents", people will turn their hands to anything, and indeed rebel against

any division of labor that deprives them of physical exercise. My own excessively sedentary occupation makes me long to be a half-time navvy. I find myself begging my gardener, who is a glutton for work, to leave me a few rough jobs to do when I have written myself to a standstill; for I cannot go out and take a hand with the navvies, because I should be taking the bread out of a poor man's mouth; nor should we be very comfortable company for one another with our different habits and speech and bringing-up, all produced by differences in our parents' incomes and class. But with all these obstacles swept away by Socialism I could lend a hand at any job within my strength and skill, and help my mates instead of hurting them, besides being as good company for them as I am now for professional persons or rich folk. Even as it is a good deal of haymaking is done for fun; and I am persuaded (having some imagination, thank Heaven!) that under Socialism open air workers would have plenty of voluntary help, female as well as male, without the trouble of whistling for it. Laws might have to be made to deal with officiousness. Everything would make for activity and against idleness: indeed it would probably be much harder to be an idler than it is now to be a pickpocket. Anyhow, as idleness would be not only a criminal offence, but unladylike and ungentlemanly in the lowest degree, nobody would resent the laws against it as infringements of natural liberty.

Lest anyone should at this point try to muddle you with the inveterate delusion that because capital can increase wealth people can live on capital without working, let me go back just for a moment to the way in which capital becomes productive.

Let us take those cases in which capital is used, not for destructive purposes, as in war, but for increasing production—that is, saving time and trouble in future work. When all the merchandise in a country has to be brought from the makers to the users on pack-horses or carts over bad roads the cost in time and trouble and labor of man and beast is so great that most things have to be made and consumed on the spot. There may be a famine in one village and a glut in another a hundred miles off because of the difficulty of sending food from one to the other. Now if there is enough spare subsistence (capital) to support gangs of navvies and engineers and other workers whilst they cover the country with railways, canals, and metalled roads, and build engines and trains, barges and motor cars to travel on them, to say nothing of aeroplanes, then all sorts of goods can be sent long distances quickly and cheaply; so that the village which formerly could not get a



cartload of bread and a few cans of milk from a hundred miles off to save its life is able to buy quite cheaply grain grown in Russia or America and domestic articles made in Germany or Japan. The spare subsistence will be entirely consumed in the operation: there will be no more left of it than of the capital lent for the war; but it will leave behind it the roadways and waterways and machinery by which labor can do a great deal more in a given time than it could without them. The destruction of these aids to labor would be a very different matter from our annual confiscations of the National Debt by taxation. It would leave us much poorer and less civilized: in fact most of us would starve, because big modern populations cannot support themselves without elaborate machinery and railways and so forth.

Still, roadways and machines can produce nothing by themselves. They can only assist labor. And they have to be continually repaired and renewed by labor. A country crammed with factories and machines, traversed in all directions by roadways, tramways and railways, dotted with aerodromes and hangars and garages, each crowded with aeroplanes and airships and motor cars, would produce absolutely nothing at all except ruin and rust and decay if the inhabitants ceased to work. We should starve in the midst of all the triumphs of civilization because we could not breakfast on the clay of the railway embankments, lunch on boiled aeroplanes, and dine on toasted steam-hammers. Nature inexorably denies to us the possibility of living without labor or of hoarding its most vital products. We may be helped by past labor; but we must live by present labor. By telling off one set of workers to produce more than they consume, and telling off another set to live on the surplus whilst they are making roads and machines, we may make our labor much more productive, and take out the gain either in shorter hours of work or bigger returns from the same number of hours of work as before; but we cannot stop working and sit down and look on while the roads and machines make and fetch and carry for us without anyone lifting a finger. We may reduce our working hours to two a day, or increase our income tenfold, or even conceivably do both at once; but by no magic on earth can any of us honestly become an idler. When you see a person who does no productive or serviceable work, you may conclude with absolute certainty that she or he is sponging on the labor of other people. It may or may not be expedient to allow certain persons this privilege for a time: sometimes it is; and sometimes it is not. I have already described how we offer at present, to anyone who can invent a

labor-saving machine, what is called a patent: that is, a right to take a share of what the workers produce with the help of that machine for fourteen years. When a man writes a book or a play, we give him, by what is called copyright, the power to make everybody who reads the book or sees the play performed pay him and his heirs something during his lifetime and fifty years afterwards. This is our way of encouraging people to invent machines and to write books and plays instead of being content with the old handiwork, and with the Bible and Shakespear; and as we do it with our eyes open and with a definite purpose, and the privilege lasts no longer than enough to accomplish its purpose, there is a good deal to be said for it. But to allow the descendants of a man who invested a few hundred pounds in the New River Water Company in the reign of James I to go on for ever and ever living in idleness on the incessant daily labor of the London ratepayers is senseless and mischievous. If they actually did the daily work of supplying London with water, they might reasonably claim either to work for less time or receive more for their work than a water-carrier in Elizabeth's time; but for doing no work at all they have not a shadow of excuse. To consider Socialism a tyranny because it will compel everyone to share the daily work of the world is to confess to the brain of an idiot and the instinct of a tramp.

Speaking generally, it is a mistake to suppose that the absence of law means the absence of tyranny. Take, for example, the tyranny of fashion. The only law concerned in this is the law that we must all wear something in the presence of other people. It does not prescribe what a woman shall wear: it only says that in public she shall be a draped figure and not a nude one. But does this mean that a woman can wear what she likes? Legally she can; but socially her slavery is more complete than any sumptuary law could make it. If she is a waitress or a parlormaid there is no question about it: she must wear a uniform or lose her employment and starve. If she is a duchess she must dress in the fashion or be ridiculous. In the case of the duchess nothing worse than ridicule is the penalty of unfashionable dressing. But any woman who has to earn her living outside her own house finds that if she is to keep her employment she must also keep up appearances, which means that she must dress in the fashion, even when it is not at all becoming to her, and her wardrobe contains serviceable dresses a couple of years out of date. And the better her class of employment the tighter her bonds. The ragpicker has the melancholy privilege of being less particular about her working clothes than the manageress of a hotel; but she

would be very glad to exchange that freedom for the obligation of the manageress to be always well dressed. In fact the most enviable women in this respect are nuns and policewomen, who, like gentlemen at evening parties and military officers on parade, never have to think of what they will wear, as it is all settled for them by regulation and custom.

This dress question is only one familiar example of the extent to which the private employment of today imposes regulations on us which are quite outside the law, but which are none the less enforced by private employers on pain of destitution. The husband in public employment, the socialized husband, is much freer than the unsocialized one in private employment. He may travel third class, wearing a lounge suit and soft hat, living in the suburbs, and spending his Sundays as he pleases, whilst the others must travel first class, wear a frock coat and tall hat, live at a fashionable address, and go to church regularly. Their wives have to do as they do; and the single women who have escaped from the limitations of the home into independent activity find just the same difference between public work and private: in public employment their livelihood is never at the mercy of a private irresponsible person as it is in private. The lengths to which women are sometimes forced to go to please their private employers are much more revolting than, for instance, the petty dishonesties in which clerks are forced to become accomplices.

Then there are estate rules: that is to say, edicts drawn up by private estate owners and imposed on their tenants without any legal sanction. These often prohibit the building on the estate of any place of worship except an Anglican church, or of any public house. They refuse houses to practitioners of the many kinds that are now not registered by the General Medical Council. In fact they exercise a tyranny which would lead to a revolution if it were attempted by the King, and which did actually provoke us to cut off a king's head in the seventeenth century. We have to submit to these tyrannies because the people who can refuse us employment or the use of land have powers of life and death over us, and can therefore make us do what they like, law or no law. Socialism would transfer this power of life and death from private hands to the hands of the constitutional authorities, and regulate it by public law. The result would be a great increase of independence, self-respect, freedom, from interference with our tastes and ways of living, and, generally, all the liberty we really care about.

Childish people, we saw, want to have all their lives regulated for

them, with occasional holiday outbursts of naughtiness to relieve the monotony; and we admitted that the able-bodied ones make good soldiers and steady conventional employees. When they are left to themselves they make laws of fashions, customs, points of etiquette, and "what other people will say", hardly daring to call their souls their own, though they may be rich enough to do as they please. Money as a means of freedom is thrown away on these people. It is funny to hear them declaring, as they often do, that Socialism would be unendurable because it would dictate to them what they should eat and drink and wear, leaving them no choice in the matter, when they are cowering under a social tyranny which regulates their meals, their clothes, their hours, their religion and politics, so ruthlessly that they dare no more walk down a fashionable street in an unfashionable hat, which there is no law to prevent them doing, than to walk down it naked, which would be stopped by the police. They regard with dread and abhorrence the emancipated spirits who, within the limits of legality and cleanliness and convenience, do not care what they wear, and boldly spend their free time as their fancy dictates.

But do not undervalue the sheepish wisdom of the conventional. Nobody can live in society without conventions. The reason why sensible people are as conventional as they can bear to be is that conventionality saves so much time and thought and trouble and social friction of one sort or another that it leaves them much more leisure for freedom than unconventionality does. Believe me, unless you intend to devote your life to preaching unconventionality, and thus make it your profession, the more conventional you are, short of being silly or slavish or miserable, the easier life will be for you. Even as a professional reformer you had better be content to preach one form of unconventionality at a time. For instance, if you rebel against high-heeled shoes, take care to do it in a very smart hat.

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## SOCIALISM AND MARRIAGE

WHEN promising new liberties, Socialists are apt to forget that people object even more strongly to new liberties than to new laws. If a woman has been accustomed to go in chains all her life and to see other women doing the same, a proposal to take her chains off will horrify her. She will feel naked without them, and clamor to have any impudent hussy who does not feel about them exactly as she does taken up by the police. In China only Manchu ladies dared

defy fashion with uncrippled feet. It is easier to put chains on people than to take them off if the chains look respectable.

In Russia marriage under the Tsars was an unbreakable chain. There was no divorce: but on the other hand there was, as with us, a widespread practice of illicit polygamy. A woman could live with a man without marrying him. A man could live with a woman without marrying her. In fact each might have several partners. In Russia under the Communist Soviet this state of things has been reversed. If a married couple cannot agree, they can obtain a divorce without having to pretend to disgrace themselves as in Protestant England. That shocks many English ladies, married or unmarried, who take the Book of Common Prayer literally. But the Soviet does not tolerate illicit relations. If a man lives with a woman as husband with wife he must marry her, even if he has to divorce another wife to do it. The woman has the right to the status of a wife, and must claim it. This seems to many English gentlemen an unbearable tyranny: they regard the Soviet legislators as monsters for interfering with male liberty in this way; and they have plenty of female sympathizers.

In countries and sects where polygamy is legal, the laws compelling the husband to pay equal attention to all his wives are staggering to a British husband, who is not now, as he was formerly, legally obliged to pay any attention to his one wife, nor she to him.

Now marriage institutions are not a part of Socialism. Marriage, of which we speak as if it were one and the same thing all the world over, differs so much from sect to sect and from country to country that to a Roman Catholic or a citizen of the State of South Carolina it means strict monogamy without the possibility of divorce; whilst to our high caste fellow-subjects in India it means unlimited polygamy, as it did to the Latter Day Saints of Salt Lake City within my recollection. Between these extremes there are many grades. There are marriages which nothing can break except death or annulment by the Pope; and there are divorces that can be ordered at a hotel like a bottle of champagne or a motor car. There is English marriage, Scottish marriage, and Irish marriage, all different. There is religious marriage and civil marriage, civil marriage being a recent institution won from the Churches after a fierce struggle, and still regarded as invalid and sinful by many pious people. There is an established celibacy, the negation of marriage, among nuns, priests, and certain Communist sects. With all this Socialism has nothing directly to do. Equality of income applies impartially to all the sects, all the States, and all the communities, to mono-

gamists, polygamists, and celibates, to infants incapable of marriage and centenarians past it.

Why, then, is it that there is a rooted belief that Socialism would in some way alter marriage, if not abolish it? Why did quite respectable English newspapers after the Russian revolution of 1917 gravely infer that the Soviet had not only nationalized land and capital, but proceeded, as part of the logic of Socialism, to nationalize women? No doubt the main explanation of that extravagance is that the highly respectable newspapers in question still regard women as property, nationalizable like any other property, and were consequently unable to understand that this very masculine view is inconceivable to a Communist. But the truth under all such nonsense is that Socialism must have a tremendous effect on marriage and the family. At present a married woman is a female slave chained to a male one; and a girl is a prisoner in the house and in the hands of her parents. When the personal relation between the parties is affectionate, and their powers not abused, the arrangement works well enough to be bearable by people who have been brought up to regard it as a matter of course. But when the parties are selfish, tyrannical, jealous, cruel, envious, with different and antagonistic tastes and beliefs, incapable of understanding one another: in short, antipathetic and incompatible, it produces much untold human unhappiness.

Why is this unhappiness endured when the door is not locked, and the victims can walk into the street at any moment? Obviously because starvation awaits them at the other side of the door. Vows and inculcated duties may seem effective in keeping unhappy wives and revolting daughters at home when they have no alternative; but there must be an immense number of cases in which wives and husbands, girls and boys, would walk out of the house, like Nora Helmer in Ibsen's famous play, if they could do so without losing a single meal, a single night's protection and shelter, or any of their social standing in consequence.

As Socialism would place them in this condition it would infallibly break up unhappy marriages and families. This being obviously desirable we need not pretend to deplore it. But we must not expect more domestic dissolutions than are likely to happen. No parent would tyrannize as some parents tyrannize now if they knew that the result would be the prompt disappearance of their children, unless indeed they disliked their children enough to desire that result, in which case so much the better; but the normal merely hasty parent would have to recover the fugitives by apolo-

gies, promises of amendment, or bribes, and keep them by more stringent self-control and less stringent parental control. Husbands and wives, if they knew that their marriage could only last on condition of its being made reasonably happy for both of them, would have to behave far better to one another than they ever seem to dream of doing now. There would be such a prodigious improvement in domestic manners all round that a fairly plausible case can be made out for expecting that far fewer marriages and families will be broken up under Socialism than at present. Still, there will be a difference, even though the difference be greatly for the better. When once it becomes feasible for a wife to leave her husband, not for a few days or weeks after a tiff because they are for the moment tired of one another, but without any intention of returning, there must be prompt and almost automatic divorce, whether they like it or not. At present a deserted wife or husband, by simply refusing to sue for divorce, can in mere revenge or jealousy, or on Church grounds, prevent the deserter from marrying again. We should have to follow the good example of Russia in refusing to tolerate such situations. Both parties must be either married or unmarried. An intermediate state in which each can say to the other "Well, if I cannot have you nobody else shall" is clearly against public morality.

It is on marriage that the secular State is likely to clash most sensationally with the Churches, because the Churches claim that marriage is a metaphysical business governed by an absolute right and wrong which has been revealed to them by God, and which the State must therefore enforce without regard to circumstances. But to this the State will never assent, except in so far as clerical notions happen to be working fairly well and to be shared by the secular rulers. Marriage is for the State simply a licence to two citizens to beget children. To say that the State must not concern itself with the question of how many people the community is to consist of, and, when a change is desired, at what rate the number should be increased or reduced, is to treat the nation as no sane person would dream of treating a ferryman. If the ferryman's boat will hold only ten passengers, and you tell him that it has been revealed to you by God that he must take all who want to cross over, even though they number a thousand, the ferryman will not argue with you, he will refuse to take more than ten, and will smite you with his oar if you attempt to detain his boat and shove a couple more passengers into it. And, obviously, the ten already aboard will help him for their own sakes.

When Socialism does away with the artificial overpopulation which Capitalism, as we have seen, produces by withdrawing workers from productive employments to wasteful ones the State will be face to face at last with the genuine population question—the question of how many people it is desirable to have in the country. To get rid of the million or so for whom our capitalists fail to find employment, the State now depends on a high death-rate, especially for infants, on war, and on swarming like the bees. Africa, America, and Australasia have taken millions of our people from us in bee swarms. But in time all places comfortable enough to tempt people to emigrate get filled up, and their inhabitants, like the Americans and Australians today, close their gates against further immigration. If we find our population still increasing, we may have to discuss whether we should keep it down, as we keep down the cat population, by putting the superfluous babies into the bucket, which would be no wickeder than the avoidable infant mortality and surgical abortion resorted to at present. The alternative would be to make it a severely punishable crime for married couples to have more than a prescribed number of children. But punishing the parents would not dispose of the unwanted children. The fiercest persecution of the mothers of illegitimate children has not prevented illegitimate children from being born, though it has made most of them additionally undesirable by afflicting them with the vices and infirmities of disgrace and poverty. Any State limiting the number of children permitted to a family would be compelled not only to tolerate contraception, but to inculcate it and instruct women in its methods. And this would immediately bring it into conflict with the Churches. Whether under such circumstances the State would simply ignore the Churches or pass a law under which their preachers could be prosecuted for sedition would depend wholly on the gravity of the emergency, and not on the principles of liberty, toleration, freedom of conscience, and so forth which were so stirring trumpeted in England in the eighteenth century when the boot was on the other foot.

In France at present the State is striving to increase the population. It is thus in the position of the Israelites in the Promised Land, and of Joseph Smith and his Mormons in the State of Illinois in 1843, when only a rapid increase in their numbers could rescue them from a condition of dangerous numerical inferiority to their enemies. Joseph Smith did what Abraham did: he resorted to polygamy. We, not being in any such peril ourselves, have seen nothing in this but an opportunity for silly and indecent jocularities;



but there are not many political records more moving than Brigham Young's description of the horror with which he received Joseph's revelation that it was the will of God that they should all take as many wives as possible. He had been brought up to regard polygamy as a mortal sin, and did sincerely so regard it. And yet he believed that Smith's revelations were from God. In his perplexity, he tells us, he found himself, when a funeral passed in the street, envying the corpse (another mortal sin): and there is not the slightest reason to doubt that he was perfectly sincere. After all, it is not necessary for a married man to have any moral or religious objection to polygamy to be horrified at the prospect of having twenty additional wives "sealed" to him. Yet Brigham Young got over his horror, and was married more than thirty times. And the genuinely pious Mormon women, whose prejudices were straiter than those of the men, were as effectively and easily converted to polygamy as Brigham.

Though this proves that western civilization is just as susceptible to polygamy as eastern when the need arises, the French Government, for very good reasons, has not ventured to propose it as a remedy for underpopulation in France. The alternatives are prizes and decorations for the parents of large families (families of fifteen have their group portraits in the illustrated papers, and are highly complimented on their patriotism), bounties, exemptions from taxation, vigorous persecution of contraception as immoral, facilities for divorce amounting to successive as distinguished from simultaneous polygamy, all tending towards that State endowment of parentage which seems likely to become a matter of course in all countries, with, of course, encouragement to desirable immigrants. To these measures no Church is likely to object, unless indeed it holds that celibacy is a condition of salvation, a doctrine which has never yet found enough practising converts to threaten a modern nation with sterility. Compulsory parentage is as possible as compulsory military service; but just as the soldier who is compelled to serve must have his expenses paid by the State, a woman compelled to become a mother can hardly be expected to do so at her own expense.

But the maintenance of monogamy must always have for its basis a practical equality in numbers between men and women. If a war reduced the male population by, say, 70 per cent, and the female population by only one per cent, polygamy would immediately be instituted, and parentage made compulsory, with the hearty support of all the really popular Churches.

Thus, it seems, the State, Capitalist or Socialist, will finally settle what marriage is to be, no matter what the Churches say. A Socialist State is more likely to interfere than a Capitalist one, because Socialism will clear the population question from the confusion into which Capitalism has thrown it. The State will then, as I have said, be face to face with the real population question; but nobody yet knows what the real population question will be like, because nobody can now settle how many persons per acre offer the highest possibilities of living. There is the Boer ideal of living out of sight of your neighbors' chimneys. There is the Bass Rock ideal of crowding as many people on the earth as it can support. There is the bungalow ideal and the monster hotel ideal. Neither you nor I can form the least notion of how posterity will decide between them when society is well organized enough to make the problem practical and the issues clear.

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## SOCIALISM AND CHILDREN

IN the case of young children we have gone far in our interference with the old Roman rights of parents. For nine mortal years the child is taken out of its parents' hands for most of the day, and thus made a State school child instead of a private family child. The records of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children are still sickening enough to shew how necessary it is to protect children against their parents; but the bad cases are scarce, and shew that it is now difficult for the worst sort of parent to evade for long the school attendance officer, the teacher, and the police. Unfortunately the proceedings lead to nothing but punishment of the parents: when they come out of prison the children are still in their hands. When we have beaten the cat for cruelty we give it back its mouse. We have now, however, taken a step in the right direction by passing an Act of Parliament by which adoptive parents have all the rights of real parents. You can now adopt a child with complete security against the parents' coming to claim the child back again whenever it suits them. All their rights pass to you by the adoption. Bad natural parents can be completely superseded by adoptive ones: it remains only to make the operation compulsory where it is imperative. Compulsory adoption is already an old established institution in the case of our Poor Law Guardians. *Oliver Twist* was a compulsorily adopted child. His natural parents were replaced by very unnatural ones. Mr Bumble is being happily abolished; but there must still be somebody to adopt Oliver. When

equality of income makes an end of his social disadvantages there will be no lack of childless volunteers

Our eyes are being opened more and more to the fact that in our school system education is only the pretext under which parents get rid of the trouble of their children by bundling them off into a prison or child farm which is politely called a school. We also know, or ought to know, that institutional treatment of children is murderous for infants and bad for all children. Homeless infants can be saved from that by adoption, but the elder children are forcing us to face the problem of organizing child life as such, giving children constitutional rights just as we have had to give them to women, and ceasing to shirk that duty either by bundling the children off to Bastilles called schools or by making the child the property of its father (in the case of an illegitimate child, of its mother) as we have ceased to shirk women's rights by making the woman the property of her husband. The beginnings of such organization are already visible in the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts. But the limits to liberty which the State has to set and the obligations which it has to impose on adults are as imperative for children as for adults. The Girl Guide cannot be always guiding nor the Boy Scout always scouting. They must qualify themselves for adult citizenship by certain acquirements whether they like it or not. That is our excuse for school: they must be educated.

Education is a word that in our mouths covers a good many things. At present we are only extricating ourselves slowly and, as usual, reluctantly and innumercally, from our grossest stupidities about it. One of them is that it means learning lessons, and that learning lessons is for children, and ceases when they come of age. I, being a septuagenarian, can assure you confidently that we never cease learning to the extent of our capacity for learning until our faculties fail us. As to what we have been taught in school and college, I should say roughly that as it takes us all our lives to find out the meaning of the small part of it that is true and the error of the large part that is false, it is not surprising that those who have been "educated" least know most. It is gravely injurious both to children and adults to be forced to study any subject for which they have no natural aptitude unless some ulterior object which they have at heart gives them a factitious keenness to master it. Mental disfigurement caused in this way is common in the modern examination-passing classes. Dickens's Mr Foots is not a mere figure of fun: he is an authentic instance of a sort of imbecility

that is dangerously prevalent in our public school and university products. Toots is no joke.

Even when a natural aptitude exists it may be overcome by the repulsion created by coercive teaching. If a girl is unmusical, any attempt to force her to learn to play Beethoven's sonatas is torture to herself and to her teachers, to say nothing of the agonies of her audiences when her parents order her to display her accomplishment to visitors. But unmusical girls are as exceptional as deaf girls. The common case of a rooted loathing for music, and a vindictive hope that Beethoven may be expiating a malevolent life in eternal torment, is that of the normally musical girl who, before she had ever heard a sonata or any other piece of music played well enough to seem beautiful to her, has been set to practise scales in a cold room, rapped over the knuckles when she struck a wrong note, and had the Pathetic Sonata rapped and scolded and bullied into her bar by bar until she could finger it out without a mistake. That is still what school-taught music means to many unfortunate young ladies whose parents desire them to have accomplishments, and accordingly pay somebody who has been handled in the same way to knock this particular accomplishment into them. If these unhappy victims thought that Socialism meant compulsory music they would die in the last ditch fighting against it; and they would be right.

If I were writing a book for men I should not speak of music: I should speak of verses written in literary Latin (meaning a sort of Latin that nobody ever spoke), of Greek, and of algebra. Many an unhappy lad who would have voluntarily picked up enough Latin and Greek to read Virgil, Horace, and Homer, or to whom Descartes, Newton, and Einstein would be heroes such as Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner are to unspoilt musicians, loathes every printed page except in a newspaper or detective story, and shrinks from an algebraic symbol or a diagram of the parallelogram of forces as a criminal from a prison. This is the result of our educational mania. When Eton was founded, the idea was that the boys should be roused at six in the morning and kept hard at their Latin without a moment's play until they went to bed. And now that the tendency is to keep them hard at play instead, without a moment for free work, their condition is hardly more promising. Either way an intelligent woman, remembering her own childhood, must stand aghast at the utter disregard of the children's ordinary human rights, and the classing of them partly as animals to be tamed and broken in, for which, provided the methods are

not those of the trainer of performing animals, there is something to be said, and partly as inanimate sacks into which learning is to be poured *ad libitum*, for which there is nothing to be said except what can be said for the water torture of the Inquisition, in which the fluid was poured down the victims' throats until they were bloated to death: But there was some method in this madness. I have already hinted to you what you must have known very well, that children, unless they are forced into a quiet, sedentary, silent, motionless, and totally unnatural association with adults, are so troublesome at home that humane parents who would submit to live in a bear-garden or a monkey-house rather than be cruelly repressive, are only too glad to hand them over to anyone who will profess to educate them, whilst the desperate struggle of the genteel disendowed younger son and unmarried daughter class to find some means of livelihood produces a number of persons who are willing to make a profession of child farming under the same highly plausible pretext.

Socialism would abolish this class by providing its members with less hateful and equally respectable employment. Nobody who had not a genuine vocation for teaching would adopt teaching as a profession. Sadists, female and male, who now get children into their power so as to be able to torture them with impunity, and child fanciers (who are sometimes the same people) of the kind that now start amateur orphanages because they have the same craze for children that some people have for horses and dogs, although they often treat them abominably, would be checkmated if the children had any refuge from them except the homes from which they had been practically turred out, and from which they would be promptly returned to their tyrants with the assurance that if they were punished it served them right for being naughty. Within a few days of writing this I have read as part of the day's news of a case in which a mother summoned a schoolmaster because he had first caned her boy for hiccuping, which is not a voluntary action, and then, because the boy made light of the punishment, fell on him in a fury and thrashed him until he raised weals on him that were visible eight days afterwards. Magistrates are usually lenient in dealing with these assaults as with similar assaults by husbands on their wives (assaults by wives are laughed out of court): indeed they usually dismiss the case with a rebuke to the victim for being an unmanly little coward and not taking his licking in good part: but this time they admitted that the punishment, as they called it, was too severe; and the schoolmaster had to pay the mother's costs,

though nobody hinted at any unfitness on his part for the duties he had assumed. And, in fairness, it did not follow that the man was a savage or a Sadist, any more than it follows that married people who commit furious assaults on one another have murderous natural dispositions. The truth is that just as married life in a one-room tenement is more than human nature can bear even when there are no children to complicate it, life in the sort of prison we call a school, where the teacher who hates her work is shut in with a crowd of unwilling, hostile, restless children, sets up a strain and a hatred that explodes from time to time in onslaughts with the cane, not only for hiccuping, but for talking, whispering, looking out of the window (inattention), and even moving. Modern psychological research, even in its rather grotesque Freudian beginnings, is forcing us to recognize how serious is the permanent harm that comes of this atmosphere of irritation on the one side and suppression, terror, and reactionary naughtiness on the other. Even those who do not study psychology are beginning to notice that chaining dogs makes them dangerous, and is a cruel practice. They will presently have misgivings about chained children too, and begin to wonder whether thrashing and muzzling them is the proper remedy.

As a general result we find that what we call education is a failure. The poor woman's child is imprisoned for nine years under pretext of teaching it to read, write, and speak its own language: a year's work at the outside. And at the end of the nine years the prisoner can do none of these things presentably. In 1896, after twenty-six years of compulsory general education, the secretary of the Union of Mathematical Instrument Makers told me that most of his members signed with a mark. Rich male children are kept in three successive prisons, the preparatory school, the public school (meaning a very exclusive private school malversating public endowments), and the university, the period of imprisonment being from twelve to fourteen years, and the subjects taught including classical languages and higher mathematics. Rich female children, formerly imprisoned in the family dungeon under a wardress called a governess, are now sent out like their brothers. The result is a slightly greater facility in reading and writing, the habits and speech of the rich idle classes, and a moral and intellectual imbecility which leaves them politically at the mercy of every bumptious adventurer and fluent charlatan who has picked up their ways and escaped their education, and morally on the level of medieval robber barons and early capitalist buccaneers. When they are

energetic and courageous, in spite of their taming, they are public dangers when they are mere sheep, doing whatever their class expects them to do, they will follow any enterprising bell-wether to the destruction of themselves and the whole community. Fortunately humanity is so recuperative that no system of suppression and perversion can quite abort it, but as far as our standard lady's and gentleman's education goes the very least that can be said against it is that most of its victims would be better without it.

It is, however, incidentally advantageous. The university student who is determined not to study, gains from the communal life of the place a social standing that is painfully lacking in the people who have been brought up in a brick box in ill-mannered intercourse with two much older people and three or four younger ones—all keeping what they call their company manners (meaning an affectation which has no desirable quality except bare civility) for the few similarly reared outsiders who are neither too poor to be invited in nor too rich to condescend to enter the box. Nobody can deny that these middle class families which cannot afford the university for their sons, and must send them out as workers at fifteen or so, appear utterly unpresentable vulgarians compared to our university products. The woman from the brick box maintains her social position by being offensive to the immense number of people whom she considers her inferiors, reserving her civility for the very few who are clinging to her own little ledge on the social precipice. For inequality of income takes the broad, safe, and fertile plain of human society and stands it on edge so that everyone has to cling desperately to her foothold and kick off as many others as she can. She would cringe to her superiors if they could be persuaded to give her the chance, whereas at a university she would have to meet hundreds of other young women on equal terms and to be at least commonly civil to everybody. It is true that university manners are not the best manners, and that there is plenty of foundation for the statement that Oxford and Cambridge are hotbeds of exclusiveness, university snobs being perhaps the most incorrigible of all snobs. For all that university snobbery is not so disabling as brick box snobbery. The university woman can get on without friction or awkwardness with all sorts of people, high or low, with whom the brick box woman simply does not know how to associate. But the university curriculum has nothing to do with this. On the contrary, it is the devoted scholar who misses it, and the university butterfly, barely squeezing through her examinations, who acquires it to perfection. Also, it can now be acquired

and greatly improved on by young people who break loose from the brick box into the wider social life of clubs and unofficial cultural associations of all kinds. The manners of the garden city and the summer school are already as far superior to the manners of the university college as these are to the manners of the brick box. There is no word that has more sinister and terrible connotations in our snobbish society than the word promiscuity, but if you exclude its special and absurd use to indicate an imaginary condition of sexual disorder in which every petticoat and every coat and trousers fall into one another's embraces at sight, you will see that social promiscuity is the secret of good manners, and that it is precisely because the university is more promiscuous than the brick box and the Theosophical or Socialist summer school more promiscuous than the college, that it is also the better mannered.

Socialism involves complete social promiscuity. It has already gone very far. When the great Duke of Wellington fell ill, he said 'Send for the apothecary', just as he would have said 'Send for the barber' and the apothecary no doubt would have called him in a very abject manner. Indeed I can myself remember famous old physicians—even titled ones, who took your fee exactly as a butler used to take your tip. In the seventeenth century a nobleman would sometimes admit an actor to an intimate friendship, but when he wrote to him he began his letter, not 'My dear So and So', but 'To Betterton the player'. Nowadays a duke who went on like that would be ridiculed as a Pooh Bah. Everybody can now travel third class in England without being physically disgusted by unclean fellow-travelers. I remember when second class carriages, now extinct, were middle class necessities.

The same process that has levelled the social intercourse between dukes and doctors or actors can level it between duchesses and dairymaids, or, what seems far less credible, between doctors' wives and dairymaids. But whilst Socialism makes for this sort of promiscuity it will also make for privacy and exclusiveness. At present the difference between a dairymaid and any decent sort of duchess is marked, not by a wounding difference between the duchess's address to the dairymaid and her address to another duchess, but by a very marked difference between the address of a dairymaid to the duchess and her address to another dairymaid. The decent duchess's civility is promiscuous, but her intimate friendship and society is not. Civility is one thing, familiarity quite another. The duchess's grievance at present is that she is obliged by her social and political position to admit to her house and table



a great many people whose tastes and intellectual interests are so different from her own that they bore her dreadfully, whilst her income cuts her off from familiar intercourse with many poor people whose society would be delightful to her, but who could not afford her expensive habits. Equality would bring to the duchess the blessing of being able to choose her familiars as far as they were willing to respond. She would no longer have to be bored by men who could talk about nothing but fox hunting or party politics when she wanted to talk about science or literature, dressmaking or gardening, or, if her tastes were more curious, the morbidities of psycho-analysis. Socialism, by steamrolling our class distinctions (really income distinctions) would break us up into sets, cliques, and solitaires. The duchess would play golf (if people could still find no more interesting employment for their leisure) with any charwoman, and lunch with her after; but the intimate circle of the duchess and the charwoman would be more exclusive and highly selected than it can possibly be now. Socialism thus offers the utmost attainable society and the utmost attainable privacy. We should be at the same time much less ceremonious in our public relations and much more delicate about intruding on one another in our private ones.

You may say, what has all this to do with education? Have we not wandered pretty far from it? By no means: a great part of our education comes from our social intercourse. We educate one-another; and we cannot do this if half of us consider the other half not good enough to talk to. But enough of that side of the subject. Let us leave the social qualifications which children, like adults, pick up from their surroundings and from the company they keep, and return to the acquirements which the State must impose on them compulsorily, providing the teachers and schools and apparatus; testing the success of the teaching; and giving qualifying certificates to those who have passed the tests.

It is now evident in all civilized States that there are certain things which people must know in order to play their part as citizens. There are technical things that must be learned, and intellectual conceptions that must be understood. For instance, you are not fit for life in a modern city unless you know the multiplication table, and agree that you must not take the law into your own hands. That much technical and liberal education is indispensable, because a woman who could not pay fares and count change, and who flew at people with whom she disagreed and tried to kill them or scratch their eyes out, would be as incapable of civilized life as a

wild cat. In our huge cities reading is necessary, as people have to proceed by written directions. In a village or a small country town you can get along by accosting the police officer, or the railway porter or station-master, or the post-mistress, and asking them what to do and where to go; but in London five minutes of that would bring business and locomotion to a standstill: the police and railway officials, hard put to it as it is answering the questions of foreigners and visitors from the country, would be driven mad if they had to tell everybody everything. The newspapers, the postal and other official guides, the innumerable notice boards and direction posts, do for the London citizen what the police constable or the nearest shopkeeper rather enjoys doing for the villager, as a word with a stranger seems an almost exciting event in a place where hardly anything else happens except the motion of the earth.

In the days when even the biggest cities were no bigger than our country towns, and all civilized life was conducted on what we should call village lines, "clergy", or the ability to read and write, was not a necessity: it was a means of extending the mental culture of the individual for the individual's own sake, and was quite exceptional. This notion still sticks in our minds. When we force a girl to learn to read, and make that an excuse for imprisoning her in a school, we pretend that the object of it is to cultivate her as an individual, and open to her the treasures of literature. That is why we do it so badly and take so long over it. But our right to cultivate a girl in any particular way against her will is not clear, even if we could claim that sitting indoors on a hard seat and being forbidden to talk or fidget or attend to anything but the teacher cultivated a girl more highly than the free activities from which this process cuts her off. The only valid reason for forcing her at all costs to acquire the technique of reading, writing, and arithmetic enough for ordinary buying and selling is that modern civilized life is impossible without them. She may be said to have a natural right to be taught them just as she has a natural right to be nursed and weaned and taught to walk.

So far the matter is beyond argument. It is true that in teaching her how to write you are also teaching her how to forge cheques and write spiteful anonymous letters, and that in teaching her to read you are opening her mind to foul and silly books, and putting into her hands those greatest wasters of time in the world, the novels that are not worth reading (say ninety-nine out of every hundred). All such objections go down before the inexorable neces-

sity for the accomplishments that make modern life possible: you might as well object to teaching her how to use a knife to cut her food on the ground that you are also teaching her how to cut the baby's throat. Every technical qualification for doing good is a technical qualification for doing evil as well; but it is not possible to leave our citizens without any technical qualifications for the art of modern living on that account.

But this does not justify us in giving our children technical education and damning the consequences. The consequences would damn us. If we teach a girl to shoot without teaching her also that thou shalt not kill, she may send a bullet through us the first time she loses her temper; and if we proceed to hang her, she may say, as so many women now say when they are in trouble, "Why did nobody tell me?" This is why compulsory education cannot be confined to technical education. There are parts of liberal education which are as necessary in modern social life as reading and writing; and it is this that makes it so difficult to draw the line beyond which the State has no right to meddle with the child's mind or body without its free consent. Later on we may make conditions: for instance, we may say that a surveyor must learn trigonometry, a sea captain navigation, and a surgeon at least as much dexterity in the handling of saws and knives on bones and tissues as a butcher acquires. But that is not the same thing as forcing everybody to be a qualified surveyor, navigator, or surgeon. What we are now considering is how much the State must force everyone to learn as the minimum qualification for life in a civilized city. If the Government forces a woman to acquire the art of composing Latin verses, it is forcing on her an accomplishment which she can never need to exercise, and which she can acquire for herself in a few months if she should nevertheless be cranky enough to want to exercise it. There is the same objection to forcing her to learn the calculus. Yet somewhere between forcing her to learn to read and put two and two together accurately, and forcing her to write sham Horace or learn the calculus, the line must be drawn. The question is, where to draw it.

On the liberal side of education it is clear that a certain minimum of law, constitutional history, and economics is indispensable as a qualification for a voter even if ethics are left entirely to the inner light. In the case of young children, dogmatic commandments against murder, theft, and the more obvious possibilities of untutored social intercourse, are imperative; and it is here that we must expect fierce controversy. I need not repeat all that we have

already been through as to the impossibility of ignoring this part of education and calling our neglect Secular Education. If on the ground that the subject is a controversial one you leave a child to find out for itself whether the earth is round or flat, it will find out that it is flat, and, after blundering into many mistakes and superstitions, be so angry with you for not teaching it that it is round, that when it becomes an adult voter it will insist on its own children having uncompromising positive guidance on the point.

What will not work in physics will not work in metaphysics either. No Government, Socialist or anti-Socialist or neutral, could possibly govern and administer a highly artificial modern State unless every citizen had a highly artificial modern conscience: that is, a creed or body of beliefs which would never occur to a primitive woman, and a body of disbeliefs, or negative creed, which would strike a primitive woman as fantastic blasphemies that must bring down on her tribe the wrath of the unseen powers. Modern governments must therefore inculcate these beliefs and disbeliefs, or at least see that they are inculcated somehow; or they cannot carry on. And the reason we are in such a mess at present is that our governments are trying to carry on with a set of beliefs and disbeliefs that belong to bygone phases of science and extinct civilizations. Imagine going to Moses or Mahomet for a code to regulate the modern money market!

If we all had the same beliefs and disbeliefs, we could go smoothly on, whether to our destruction or the millennium. But the conflicts between contradictory beliefs, and the progressive repudiations of beliefs which must continue as long as we have different patterns of mankind in different phases of evolution, will necessarily produce conflicts of opinion as to what should be taught in the public schools under the head of religious dogma and liberal education. At the present moment there are many people who hold that it is absolutely necessary to a child's salvation from an eternity of grotesque and frightful torment in a lake of burning brimstone that it should be baptized with water, as it is born under a divine curse and is a child of wrath and sin, and that as it grows into a condition of responsibility it must be impressed with this belief, with the addition that all its sins were atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, on the cross, this atonement being effectual only for those who believe in it. Failing such belief the efficacy of the baptism is annulled, and the doom of eternal damnation reincurred. This is the official and State-endowed religion in our country to-day; and there is still on the statute book a law decreeing heavy

punishments for anyone who denies its validity, which no Cabinet dares repeal.

Now it is not probable that a fully developed Socialist State will either impress these beliefs on children or permit any private person to do so until the child has reached what is called in another connection the age of consent. The State has to protect the souls of the children as well as their bodies; and modern psychology confirms common experience in teaching that to horrify a young child with stories of brimstone hells, and make it believe that it is a little devil who can only escape from that hell by maintaining a sinless virtue to which no saint or heroine has ever pretended, is to injure it for life more cruelly than by any act of bodily violence that even the most brutal taskmaster would dare to prescribe or justify. To put it quite frankly and flatly, the Socialist State, as far as I can guess, will teach the child the multiplication table, but will not only not teach it the Church Catechism, but if the State teachers find that the child's parents have been teaching it the Catechism otherwise than as a curious historical document, the parents will be warned that if they persist the child will be taken out of their hands and handed over to the Lord Chancellor, exactly as the children of Shelley were when their maternal grandfather denounced his son-in-law as an atheist.

Further, a Socialist State will not allow its children to be taught that polygamy, slaughter of prisoners of war, and blood sacrifices, including human sacrifices, are divinely appointed institutions; and this means that it will not allow the Bible to be introduced in schools otherwise than as a collection of old chronicles, poems, oracles, and political fulminations, on the same footing as the travels of Marco Polo, Goethe's *Faust*, Carlyle's *Past and Present* and Sartor Resartus, and Ruskin's *Ethics of the Dust*. Also the doctrine that our life in this world is only a brief preliminary episode in preparation for an all-important life to come, and that it does not matter how poor or miserable or plague ridden we are in this world, as we shall be gloriously compensated in the next if we suffer patiently, will be prosecuted as seditious and blasphemous.

Such a change would not be so great as some of us fear, though it would be a cataclysm if our present toleration and teaching of these doctrines were sincere. Fortunately it is not. The people who take them seriously, or even attach any definite meaning to the words in which they are formulated, are so exceptional that they are mostly marked off into little sects which are popularly regarded as not quite sane. It may be questioned whether as much as one per

cent of the people who describe themselves as members of the Church of England, sending their children to its baptismal fonts, confirmation rite, and schools, and regularly attending its services, either know or care what they are committed to by its dogmas or articles, or read and believe them as they read and believe the morning paper. Possibly the percentage of Nonconformists who know the Westminster Confession and accept it may be slightly larger, because Nonconformity includes the extreme sects; but as these sects play the most fantastic variations on the doctrine of the Catechism, Nonconformity covers views which have been violently persecuted by the Church as blasphemous and atheistic. I am quite sure that unless you have made a special study of the subject you have no suspicion of the variety and incompatibility of the British religions that come under the general heading of Christian. No Government could possibly please them all. Queen Elizabeth, who tried to do it by drawing up thirtynine articles alternately asserting and denying the disputed doctrines, so that every woman could find her own creed affirmed there and the other woman's creed denounced, has been a complete failure except as a means of keeping tender consciences and scrupulous intellects out of the Church. Ordinary clergymen subscribe them under duress because they cannot otherwise obtain ordination. Nobody pretends that they are all credible by the same person at the same moment; and few people even know what they are or what they mean. They could all be dropped silently without any shock to the real beliefs of most of us.

A Capitalist Government must inculcate whatever doctrine is best calculated to make the common people docile wage slaves; and a Socialist Government must equally inculcate whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists. No Government, whatever its policy may be, can be indifferent to the formation of the inculcated common creed of the nation. Society is impossible unless the individuals who compose it have the same beliefs as to what is right and wrong in commonplace conduct. They must have a common creed antecedent to the Apostles' creed, the Nicene creed, the Athanasian creed, and all the other religious manifestoes. Queen Mary Tudor and Queen Elizabeth, King James the Second and King William the Third, could not agree about the Real Presence; but they all agreed that it was wrong to rob, murder, or set fire to the house of your neighbor. The sentry at the gate of Buckingham Palace may disagree with the Royal Family on many points, ranging from the imperial policy of the Cabinet, or the

revision of the Prayer Book, to which horse to back for the Derby; but unless there were perfect harmony between them as to the proper limits to the use of his rifle and bayonet their social relation could not be maintained: there could be neither king nor sentry. We all deprecate prejudice; but if all of us were not animated sacks of prejudices, and at least nine-tenths of them were not the same prejudices so deeply rooted that we never think of them as prejudices but call them common sense, we could no more form a community than so many snakes.

This common sense is not all inborn. Some of it is: for instance, a woman knows without being told that she must not eat her baby, and that she must feed it and rear it at all hazards. But she has not the same feeling about paying her rates and taxes, although this is as necessary to the life of society as the rearing of infants to the life of humanity. A friend of mine who was a highly educated woman, the head of a famous college in the north of London, fiercely disputed the right of the local authority to have the drainage of the college examined by a public sanitary inspector. Her creed was that of a jealously private lady brought up in a private house; and it seemed an outrage to her that a man with whom she was not on visiting terms should be legally privileged to walk into the most private apartments of her college otherwise than at her invitation. Yet the health of the community depends on a general belief that this privilege is salutary and reasonable. The enlargement of the social creed to that extent is the only way to get rid of cholera epidemics. But this very able and highly instructed lady, though still in the prime of life, was too old to learn.

The social creed must be imposed on us when we are children; for it is like riding, or reading music at sight: it can never become a second nature to those who try to learn it as adults; and the social creed, to be really effective, must be a second nature to us. It is quite easy to give people a second nature, however unnatural, if you catch them early enough. There is no belief, however grotesque and even villainous, that cannot be made a part of human nature if it is inculcated in childhood and not contradicted in the child's hearing. Now that you are grown up, nothing could persuade you that it is right to lame every woman for life by binding her feet painfully in childhood on the ground that it is not ladylike to move about freely like an animal. If you are the wife of a general or admiral nothing could persuade you that when the King dies you and your husband are bound in honor to commit suicide so as to accompany your sovereign into the next world. Nothing

could persuade you that it is every widow's duty to be cremated alive with the dead body of her husband. But if you had been caught early enough you could have been made to believe and do all these things exactly as Chinese, Japanese, and Indian women have believed and done them. You may say that these were heathen Eastern women, and that you are a Christian Western. But I can remember when your grandmother, also a Christian Western, believed that she would be disgraced for ever if she let anyone see her ankles in the street, or (if she was "a real lady") walk there alone. The spectacle she made of herself when, as a married woman, she put on a cap to announce to the world that she must no longer be attractive to men, and the amazing figure she cut as a widow in crape robes symbolic of her utter desolation and wee, would, if you could see or even conceive them, convince you that it was purely her luck and not any superiority of western to eastern womanhood that saved her from the bound feet, the suttee, and the hara-kiri. If you still doubt it, look at the way in which men go to war and commit frightful atrocities because they believe it is their duty, and also because the women would spit in their faces if they refused, all because this has been inculcated upon them from their childhood, thus creating the public opinion which enables the Government not only to raise enthusiastic volunteer armies, but to enforce military service by heavy penalties on the few people who, thinking for themselves, cannot accept wholesale murder and ruin as patriotic virtues.

It is clear that if all female children are to have their minds formed as the mind of Queen Victoria was formed in her infancy, a Socialist State will be impossible. Therefore it may be taken as certain that after the conquest of Parliament by the proletariat, the formation of a child's mind on that model will be prevented by every means within the power of the Government. Children will not be taught to ask God to bless the squire and his relations and keep us in our proper stations, nor will they be brought up in such a way that it will seem natural to them to praise God because he makes them eat whilst others starve, and sing while others do lament. If teachers are caught inculcating that attitude they will be sacked: if nurses, their certificates will be cancelled, and jobs found for them that do not involve intercourse with young children. Victorian parents will share the fate of Shelley. Adults must think what they please subject to their being locked up as lunatics if they think too unsocially; but on points that are structural in the social edifice, constitutional points as we call them, no quarter will be



given in infant schools. The child's up-to-date second nature will be an official second nature, just as the obsolete second nature inculcated at our public schools and universities is at present.

When the child has learnt its social creed and catechism, and can read, write, reckon, and use its hands: in short, when it is qualified to make its way about in modern cities and do ordinary useful work, it had better be left to find out for itself what is good for it in the direction of higher cultivation. If it is a Newton or a Shakespear it will learn the calculus or the art of the theatre without having them shoved down its throat: all that is necessary is that it should have access to books, teachers, and theatres. If its mind does not want to be highly cultivated, its mind should be let alone on the ground that its mind knows best what is good for it. Mentally, fallow is as important as seedtime. Even bodies can be exhausted by overcultivation. Trying to make people champion athletes indiscriminately is as idiotic as trying to make them Ireland Scholars indiscriminately. There is no reason to expect that Socialist rule will be more idiotic than the rule which has produced Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge, and Squeers.

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## SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES

How far a Socialist State will tolerate a Church in our sense at all is a pretty question. The quarrel between Church and State is an old one. In speculating on it we must for the moment leave our personal churchgoings and persuasions out of account, and try to look at the question from the outside as we look at the religions of the east; or, to put it bookishly, objectively, not subjectively. At present, if a woman opens a consulting room in Bond Street, and sits there in strange robes professing to foretell the future by cards or crystals or revelations made to her by spirits, she is prosecuted as a criminal for imposture. But if a man puts on strange robes and opens a church in which he professes to absolve us from the guilt of our misdeeds, to hold the keys of heaven and hell, to guarantee that what he looses or binds on earth shall be loosed and bound in heaven, to alleviate the lot of souls in purgatory, to speak with the voice of God, and to dictate what is sin and what is not to all the world (pretensions which, if you look at them objectively, are far more extravagant and dangerous than those of the poor sorceress with her cards and tea leaves and crystals), the police treat him with great respect; and nobody dreams of prosecuting him as an outrageous imposter. The objective explanation of his immunity is

that a great many people do not think him an imposter: they believe devoutly that he can do all these things that he pretends to do; and this enables him and his fellow priests to organize themselves into a powerful and rich body calling itself The Church, supported by the money, the votes, and the resolution to die in its defence, of millions of citizens. The priest can not only defy the police as the common sorceress cannot: he has only to convince a sufficient number of people of his divine mission to thrust the Government aside; assume all its functions except the dirty work that he does not care to soil his hands with and therefore leaves to "the secular arm"; take on himself powers of life and death, salvation and damnation; dictate what we shall all read and think; and place in every family an officer to regulate our lives in every particular according to his notions of right and wrong.

This is not a fancy picture. History tells us of an emperor crawling on his knees through the snow and lying there all night supplicating pardon from the head of a Church, and of a king of England flogging himself in the cathedral where a priest had been murdered at his suggestion. Citizens have been stripped of all their possessions, tortured, mutilated, burned alive, by priests whose wrath did not spare even the dead in their graves, whilst the secular rulers of the land were forced, against their own interest and better sense, to abet them in their furious fanaticism.

You may say that this was far off or long ago; that I am raking up old tales of Canossa, of Canterbury in the middle ages, of Spain in the fifteenth century, of Orange bogies like Bloody Mary and Torquemada; that such things have not been done in England since the British parliamentary government cut Archbishop Laud's head off for doing them; and that popes are now in greater danger of being imprisoned, and priests and monks of being exiled, by emperors and republicans alike, than statesmen of being excommunicated. You may add that the British State burnt women alive for coining and for rebellion, and pressed men to death under heavy weights for refusing for their wives' and children's sake to plead to charges of felony, long after priests had dropped such methods of dealing with heretics.

But even if women were still burnt at the stake as ruthlessly as negroes are today by lynching mobs in America, there would still be a struggle between Church and State as to which of them had the right and power to burn. Who is to be allowed to exercise the great powers that the Government of a modern civilized State must possess if its civilization is to endure? The kings have sub-

jugated the barons; the parliaments have subjugated the kings; democracy has been subjugated by plutocracy; and plutocracy is blindly provoking the subjugated Demos to set up the proletarian State and make an end of Capitalist Oligarchy. But there is a rival power which has persisted and will persist through all these changes; and that is Theocracy, the power of priests (sometimes called parsons) organised into Churches professing to derive their authority from God. Crushed in one form it arises in another. When it was organized as the Church of Rome its abuses provoked the Reformation in England and Northern Europe, and in France the wrath of Voltaire and the French revolution. In both cases it was disarmed until its power to overrule the State was broken, and it became a mere tool of Plutocracy.

But note what followed. The reaction against the priests went so far in Britain, Switzerland, Holland, and America that at the cry of No Popery every Roman Catholic trembled for his house and every priest for his life. Yet under Laud and the Star Chamber in England, and Calvin in Geneva, Theocracy was stronger than ever; for Calvin outpopped all the popes, and John Knox in Scotland made her princes tremble as no pope had ever done. But perhaps you will say again "This was long ago: we have advanced since then". So you have always been told; but look at the facts within my own recollection. Among my contemporaries I can remember Brigham Young, President Kruger, and Mrs Eddy. Joseph Smith, Junior, was martyred only twelve years before I was born. You may never have heard of Joseph; but I assure you his career was in many respects, up to the date of his martyrdom, curiously like that of Mahomet, the obscure Arab camel driver whose followers conquered half the world, and are still making the position of the British Empire in Asia very difficult. Joseph claimed direct revelation from God, and set up a Theocracy which was carried on by Brigham Young, a Mormon Moses, one of the ablest rulers on record, until the secular Government of the United States became convinced that Mormon Theocracy was not compatible with American Democracy, and took advantage of the popular prejudice against its "plurality of wives" (polygamy) to smash it. It is by no means dead yet; but for the moment its teeth, which were sharp, are drawn; and its place in the struggle is occupied by The Church of Christ Scientist, founded by an American lady (who might have been yourself) named Mrs Eddy. I often pass two handsome churches of hers in London; and for all I know there may be others that are out of my beat there. Now unless you happen to

be a Mormon or a Christian Scientist, it is probable that you think about Mrs Eddy exactly as a Roman lady in the second century A.D. thought about the mother of Christ, and about Joseph Smith as an English lady in the Middle Ages thought about "the accursed Mahound". You may be right or you may be wrong; but for all you know Mrs Eddy a thousand years hence may be worshipped as the Divine Woman by millions of civilized people, and Joseph Smith may be to millions more what Mahomet now is to Islam. You never can tell. People begin by saying "Is not this the carpenter's son?" and end by saying "Behold the Lamb of God!"

The secular Governments, or States, of the future, like those of the present and past, will find themselves repeatedly up against the pretensions of Churches, new and old, to exercise, as Theocracies, powers and privileges which no secular Government now claims. The trouble becomes serious when a new Church attempts to introduce new political or social institutions, or to revive obsolete ones. Joseph Smith was allowed to represent himself as having been directed by an angel to a place where a continuation of the Bible, inscribed on gold plates, was buried in the earth, and as having direct and, if necessary, daily revelations from God which enabled him to act as an infallible lawgiver. When he found plenty of able business women and men to believe him, the Government of the United States held that their belief was their own business and within their own rights as long as Joseph's laws harmonized with the State laws. But when Joseph revived Solomonic polygamy the monogamic secular Government had to cross swords with him. Not for many years did it get the upper hand; and its adversary is not dead yet.

Mrs Eddy did the opposite: she did not introduce a new institution; but she challenged one of the standing institutions of the secular State. The secular State prescribed pathogenic inoculations as preventives of disease, and bottles of medicine and surgical operations, administered and performed by its registered doctors and surgeons, as cures; and anyone who left a child or an invalid for whom she was responsible undoctored was punished severely for criminal neglect. Some governments refused to admit uninoculated persons into their territories. Mrs Eddy revived the practice prescribed by St James in the New Testament, instructing her disciples to have nothing to do with bottles and inoculations; and immediately the secular government was at war with Christian Science and began to persecute its healers.

This case is interesting because it illustrates the fact that new

Churches sometimes capture the secular government by denying that they are Churches. The conflict between Mrs Eddy and the secular governments was really a conflict between the Church of Christ Scientist and the new Church of Jenner and Pasteur Scientists, which has the secular governments in its pocket exactly as the Church of Rome had Charlemagne. It also incidentally illustrates the tendency of all Churches to institute certain rites to signalize the reception of children and converts into the Church. The Jews prescribe a surgical operation, fortunately not serious nor harmful. The Christian Churches prescribe water baptism and anointing; also quite harmless. The babies object vociferously; but as they neither foresee the rite nor remember it they are none the worse. But the inoculations of the modern Churches which profess Science, with their lists of miracles, their biographies of their saints, their ruthless persecutions, their threats of dreadful plagues and horrible torments if they are disobeyed, their claims to hold the keys of mortal life and death, their sacrifices and divinations, their demands for exemption from all moral law in their researches and all legal responsibility in their clinical practice, leave the pretensions of the avowed priests and prophets nowhere, are dangerous and sometimes deadly; and it is round this disguised Church that the persecutions and fanaticisms of today rage. There is very little danger of a British Parliament persecuting in the name of Christ, and none at all of its persecuting in the name of Mahomet in the west; but it has persecuted cruelly for a century in the name of Jenner; and there is a very serious danger of its persecuting the general public as it now persecutes soldiers in the name of Pasteur, whose portrait is already on the postage stamps of the resolutely secularist (as it imagines) French Republic. In the broadest thoroughfare of fashionable London we have erected a startling brazen image of the famous Pasteurite surgeon Lord Lister, who, when the present age of faith in scientific miracles has passed, will probably be described as a high priest who substituted carbolic acid for holy water and consecrated oil as a magic cure for festering wounds. His methods are no longer in fashion in the hospitals; and he has been left far behind as a theorist; but when the centenary of his birth was celebrated in 1927, the stories of his miracles, told with boundless credulity and technical ignorance in all the newspapers, shewed that he was really being worshipped as a saint.

From this, I invite you to note how deceptive history may be. The continual springing up of new Churches has always forced secular governments to make and administer laws to deal with them, be-

cause, though some of them are reasonable and respectable enough to be left alone, and others are too strongly represented in Parliament and in the electorate to be safely interfered with, a good many of which you have never heard defy the laws as to personal decency and violate the tables of consanguinity to such an extent that if the authorities did not suppress them the people would lynch them. That is why tribunals like the Inquisition and the Star Chamber had to be set up to bring them to justice. But as these were not really secular tribunals, being in fact instruments of rival Churches, their powers were abused, the new prophets and their followers being restrained or punished, not as offenders against the secular law, but as heretics: that is, as dissenters from the Church which had gained control of the secular government: the Church of Rome in the case of the Inquisition, and the Church of England in the case of the Star Chamber.

The difficulty, you see, is that though there is a continual rivalry between Churches and States for the powers of government, yet the States do not disentangle themselves from the Churches, because the members of the secular parliaments and Cabinets are all Churchmen of one sort or another. In England this muddle is illustrated by the ridiculous fact that the bishops of the Church of England have seats as such in the House of Lords whilst the clergy are excluded as such from the House of Commons. The Parliaments are the rivals of the Churches and yet become their instruments; so that the struggle between them is rather as to whether the Churches shall exercise power directly, calling in the secular arm merely to enforce their decisions without question, or whether they shall be mere constituents of the Parliaments like any other society of citizens, leaving the ultimate decisions to the State. If, however, any particular Church is powerful enough to make it a condition of admission to Parliament, or of occupation of the throne or the judicial bench, or of employment in the public services or the professions, that the postulant shall be one of its members, that Church will be in practice, if not in theory, stronger than it could be as a Theocracy ruling independently of the secular State. This power was actually achieved by the Church of England; but it broke down because the English people would not remain in one Church. They broke away from the Church of England in all directions, and formed Free Churches. One of these, called the Society of Friends (popularly called Quakers), carried its repudiation of Church of England ecclesiasticism to the length of denouncing priests as imposters, set prayers as an insult to God ("address-

ing God in another man's words"), and church buildings as "steeple houses"; yet this body, by sheer force of character, came out of a savage persecution the most respected and politically influential of religious forces in the country. When the Free Churches could no longer be kept out of Parliament, and the Church of England could not be induced to grant any of them a special privilege, there was nothing for it but to admit everybody who was a Christian Deist of any denomination. The line was still drawn at Jews and Atheists; but the Jews soon made their way in; and finally a famous Atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, broke down the last barrier to the House of Commons by forcing the House to accept, instead of the Deist oath, a form of affirmation which relieved Atheists from the necessity of perjuring themselves before taking their seats. We are now accustomed to Jewish Prime Ministers; and we do not know whether our Gentile Prime Ministers are Atheists or not, because it never occurs to us to ask the question. The King alone remains bound by a coronation oath which obliges him to repudiate the Church of many of his subjects, though he has to maintain that Church and several others, some not even Christian, in parts of the Empire where the alternative would be no Church at all.

When Parliament is open to all the Churches, including the Atheist Churches (for the Positivist Societies, the Ethical Societies, the Agnostics, the Materialists, the Darwinian Natural Selectionists, the Creative Evolutionists, and even the Pantheists are all infidels and Atheists from the strict Evangelical or Fundamentalist point of view), it becomes impossible to attach religious rites to our institutions, because none of the Churches will consent to make any rites but their own legally obligatory. Parliament is therefore compelled to provide purely civil formalities as substitutes for religious services in the naming of children, in marriage, and in the disposal of the dead. Today the civil registrar will marry you and name your children as legally as an archbishop or a cardinal; and when there is a death in the family you can have the body cremated either with any sort of ceremony you please or no ceremony at all except the registration of the death after certification of its cause by a registered doctor.

As, in addition, you need not now pay Church rates unless you want to, we have arrived at a point at which, from one end of our lives to the other, we are not compelled by law to pay a penny to the priest unless we are country landlords, nor attend a religious service, nor concern ourselves in any way with religion in the popular sense of the word. Compulsion by public opinion, or by

our employers or landlords, is, as we have seen, another matter; but here we are dealing only with State compulsion. Delivered from all this, we are left face to face with a body of beliefs calling itself Science, now more Catholic than any of the avowed Churches ever succeeded in being (for it has gone right round the world), demanding, and in some countries obtaining, compulsory inoculation for children and soldiers and immigrants, compulsory castration for dysgenic adults, compulsory segregation and tutelage for "mental defectives", compulsory sanitation for our houses, and hygienic spacing and placing for our cities, with other compulsions of which the older Churches never dreamt, at the behest of doctors and "men of science". In England we are still too much in the grip of the old ways to have done either our best or our worst in this direction; but if you care to know what Parliaments are capable of when they have ceased to believe what old-fashioned priests tell them and lavish all their natural childish credulity on professors of Science you must study the statute books of the American State Legislatures, the "crowned republics" of our own Dominions, and the new democracies of South America and Eastern Europe. When all the States are captured by the proletariat in the names of Freedom and Equality, the cry may arise that the little finger of Medical Research (calling itself Science) is thicker than the loins of Religion.

Now what made the old-fashioned religion so powerful was that at its best (meaning in the hands of its best believers) there was much positive good in it, and much comfort for those who could not bear the cruelty of nature without some explanation of life that carried with it an assurance that righteousness and mercy will have the last word. This is the power of Science also: it, too, at its best has done enormous positive good; and it also at its highest flight gives a meaning to life which is full of encouragement, exultation, and intense interest. You may yourself be greatly concerned as to whether the old or the new explanation is the true one; but looking at it objectively you must put aside the question of absolute truth, and simply observe and accept the fact that the nation is made up of a relatively small number of religious or scientific zealots, a huge mass of people who do not bother about the business at all, their sole notion of religion and morality being to do as other people in their class do, and a good many Betwixt-and-Betweens. The neutrals are in one sense the important people, because any creed may be imposed on them by inculcation during infancy, whereas the believers and unbelievers who think for themselves will let themselves be burnt alive rather than conform to a creed imposed



on them by any power except their own consciences. It is over the inculcation, involving the creation of that official second nature which we discussed in the preceding chapter, that the State finds itself at loggerheads with the Churches which have not captured it.

Take a typical example or two. If any society of adults, calling itself a Church or not, preaches the old doctrine of the resurrection of the body at a great Last Judgment of all mankind, there is no likelihood of the municipality of a crowded city objecting. But if a survival of the childish idea that a body can be preserved for resurrection by putting it into a box and burying it in the earth, whereas reducing it to ashes in two hours in a cremation furnace renders its resurrection impossible, leads any sect or Church or individual to preach and practise intramural interment as a religious duty, then it is pretty certain that the municipality will not keep such preaching out of its schools, but see to it that the children are taught to regard cremation as the proper way of disposing of the dead in towns, and forcibly prevent intramural interment whether pious parents approve of it or not.

If a Church, holding that animals are set apart from human beings by having no souls, and were created for the use of mankind and not for their own sakes, teaches that animals have no rights, and women and men no duties to them, their teaching on that point will be excluded from the schools and their members prosecuted for cruelty to animals by the secular authority.

If another Church wants to set up an abattoir in which animals will be killed in a comparatively cruel manner instead of by a humane killer in the municipal abattoir, it will not be allowed to do it nor to teach children that it ought to be done, unless, indeed, it commands votes enough to control the municipality to that extent; and if its members refuse to eat humanely slaughtered meat they will have to advance, like me, to vegetarianism.

When the question is raised, as it will be sooner or later, of the reservation of our cathedrals for the sermons of one particular Church, it will not be settled on the assumption that any one Church has a monopoly of religious truth. It is settled at present on the Elizabethan assumption that the services of the Church of England ought to please everybody; and it is quite possible that if the services of the Church of England were purified from its grosser sectarian superstitions and a form of service arrived at containing nothing offensive to anyone desiring the consolation or stimulus of a religious ritual, the State might very well reserve the cathedrals for that form of service exclusively, provided that, as at present,

the building were available most of the time for free private meditation and prayer. (You may not have realized that any Jew, any Mahometan, any Agnostic, any woman of any creed or no creed, may use our cathedrals daily to "make her soul" between the services). To throw open the cathedrals to the rituals of all the Churches is a physical impossibility. To sell them on capitalist principles to the highest bidders to do what they like with is a moral impossibility for the State, though the Church has sold churches often enough. To simply make of them show places like Stonehenge, and charge for admission, as the Church of England sometimes does in the choir, would destroy their value for those who cannot worship without the aid of a ritual.

There is also the Russian plan of the State taking formal possession of the material property of the national Church, and then letting it go on as before, with the quaint difference that the statesmen and officials, instead of posing as devout Churchmen, sincerely or not, as in England, solemnly warn the people that the whole business is a superstitious mummerly got up to keep them in submissive slavery by doping them with promises of bliss after death if only they will suffer poverty and slavery patiently before it. This, however, cannot last. It is only the reaction of the victorious proletariat against the previous unholy alliance of the Church with their former oppressors. It is mere anti-clericalism; and when clericalism as we know it disappears, and Churches can maintain themselves only as Churches of the people and not as spiritual fortresses of Capitalism, the anti-clerical reaction will pass away. The Russian Government knows that a purely negative attitude towards religion is politically impossible; accordingly, it teaches the children a new creed called Marxism, of which more presently. Even in the first flush of the reaction the Soviet was more tolerant than we were when our hour came to revolt. We frankly robbed the Church of all it possessed and gave the plunder to the landlords. Long after that we deliberately cut off our Archbishop's head. Certainly the Soviet made it quite clear to the Russian archbishop that if he did not make up his mind to accept the fact of the revolution and give to the Soviet the allegiance he had formerly given to the Tsar, he would be shot. But when he very sensibly and properly made up his mind accordingly, he was released, and is now presumably pontificating much more freely than the Archbishop of Canterbury.

So far, I have dealt with the Churches objectively and not with religion subjectively. It is an old saying: the nearer the Church the

farther from God. But we must cross the line just for a paragraph or two. A live religion alone can nerve women to overcome their dread of any great social change, and to face that extraction of dead religions and dead parts of religions which is as necessary as the extraction of dead or decaying teeth. All courage is religious: without religion we are cowards. Men, because they have been specialized for fighting and hunting whilst women, as the child-bearers, have had to be protected from such risks, have got into the way of accepting the ferocities of war and the daring emulations of sportsmanship as substitutes for courage; and they have imposed that fraud to some extent on women. But women know instinctively, even when they are echoing male glory stuff, that communities live not by slaughter and by daring death, but by creating life and nursing it to its highest possibilities. When Ibsen said that the hope of the world lay in the women and the workers he was neither a sentimentalist nor a demagogue. You cannot have read this far (unless you have skipped recklessly) without discovering that I know as well as Ibsen did, or as you do, that women are not angels. They are as foolish as men in many ways; but they have had to devote themselves to life whilst men have had to devote themselves to death; and that makes a vital difference in male and female religion. Women have been forced to fear whilst men have been forced to dare: the heroism of a woman is to nurse and protect life, and of a man to destroy it and court death. But the homicidal heroes are often abject cowards in the face of new ideas, and veritable Weary Willies when they are asked to think. Their heroism is politically mischievous and useless. Knowing instinctively that if they thought about what they do they might find themselves unable to do it, they are afraid to think. That is why the heroine has to think for them, even to the extent of often having no time left to think for herself. She needs more and not less courage than a man; and this she must get from a creed that will bear thinking of without becoming incredible.

Let me then assume that you have a religion, and that the most important question you have to ask about Socialism is whether it will be hostile to that religion. The reply is quite simple. If your religion requires that incomes shall be unequal, Socialism will do all it can to persecute it out of existence, and will treat you much as the government of British India treated the Thugs in 1830. If your religion is compatible with equality of income, there is no reason on earth to fear that a Socialist Government will treat it or you any worse than any other sort of government would, and it would

certainly save you from the private persecution, enforced by threats of loss of employment, to which you are subject under Capitalism today if you are in the employment of a bigot.

There is, however, a danger against which you should be on your guard. Socialism may be preached, not as a far-reaching economic reform, but as a new Church founded on a new revelation of the will of God made by a new prophet. It actually is so preached at present. Do not be misled by the fact that the missionaries of Church Socialism do not use the word God, nor call their organization a Church, nor decorate their meeting-places with steeples. They preach an inevitable, final, supreme category in the order of the universe in which all the contradictions of the earlier and lower categories will be reconciled. They do not speak, except in derision, of the Holy Ghost or the Paraclete; but they preach the Hegelian Dialectic. Their prophet is named neither Jesus nor Mahomet nor Luther nor Augustine nor Dominic nor Joseph Smith, Junior, nor Mary Baker Glover Eddy, but Karl Marx. They call themselves, not the Catholic Church, but the Third International. Their metaphysical literature begins with the German philosophers Hegel and Feuerbach, and culminates in *Das Kapital*, the literary masterpiece of Marx, described as "The Bible of the working classes", inspired, infallible, omniscient. Two of their tenets contradict one another as flatly as the first two paragraphs of Article 28 of the Church of England. One is that the evolution of Capitalism into Socialism is predestined, implying that we have nothing to do but sit down and wait for it to occur. This is their version of Salvation by Faith. The other is that it must be effected by a revolution establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. This is their version of Salvation by Works.

The success of the Russian revolution was due to its leadership by Marxist fanatics: but its subsequent mistakes had the same cause. Marxism is not only useless but disastrous as a guide to the practice of government. It gets no nearer to a definition of Socialism than as a Hegelian category in which the contradictions of Capitalism shall be reconciled, and in which political power shall have passed to the proletariat. Germans and Clydeside Scots find spiritual comfort in such abstractions; but they are unintelligible and repulsive to Englishwomen, and could not by themselves qualify anyone, English, Scotch, or German, to manage a wheelstall for five minutes, much less to govern a modern State, as Lenin very soon found out and very frankly confessed.

But Lenin and his successors were not able to extricate the new

Russian national State they had set up from this new Russian international (Catholic) Church any more than our Henry II or the Emperor who had to come to Canossa was able to extricate the English State and the medieval Empire from the Church of Rome. Nobody can foresee today whether the policy of Russia in any crisis will be determined on secular and national grounds by the Soviet or by the Third International on Marxist grounds. We are facing the Soviet as Queen Elizabeth faced Philip of Spain, willing enough to deal with him as an earthly king, but not as the agent of a Catholic Theocracy. In Russia the State will sooner or later have to break the temporal power of the Marxist Church and take politics out of its hands, exactly as the British and other Protestant States have broken the temporal power of the Roman Church, and been followed much more drastically by the French and Italian States. But until then the Church of Marx, the Third International, will give as much trouble as the Popes did formerly. It will give it in the name of Communism and Socialism, and be resisted not only by Capitalists but by the Communists and Socialists who understand that Communism and Socialism are matters for States and not for Churches to handle. King John was no less Christian than the Pope when he said that no Italian priest should tithe and toll in his dominions; and our Labor leaders can remain convinced Socialists and Communists whilst refusing to stand any foreign or domestic interference from the Third International or to acknowledge the divinity of Marx.

Still, our Protestant repudiation of the authority of the new Marxist Church should not make us forget that if the Marxist Bible cannot be taken as a guide to parliamentary tactics, the same may be said of those very revolutionary documents the Gospels. We do not on that account burn the Gospels and conclude that the preacher of The Sermon on the Mount has nothing to teach us; and neither should we burn *Das Kapital* and ban Marx as a worthless author whom nobody ought to read. Marx did not get his great reputation for nothing: he was a very great teacher; and the people who have not yet learnt his lessons make most dangerous states-women and statesmen. But those who have really learnt from him instead of blindly worshipping him as an infallible prophet are not Marxists any more than Marx himself was a Marxist. I myself was converted to Socialism by *Das Kapital*; and though I have since had to spend a good deal of time pointing out Marx's mistakes in abstract economics, his total lack of experience in the responsible management of public affairs, and the unlikeness at close quarters

of his typical descriptions of the proletariat to any earthly working woman or of the bourgeoisie to any real lady of property, you may confidently set down those who speak contemptuously of Karl Marx either as pretenders who have never read him or persons incapable of his great mental range. Do not vote for such a person. Do not, however, vote for a Marxist fanatic either, unless you can catch one young enough or acute enough to grow out of Marxism after a little experience, as Lenin did. Marxism, like Mormonism, Fascism, Imperialism, and indeed all the would-be Catholicisms except Socialism and Capitalism, is essentially a call to a new Theocracy. Both Socialism and Capitalism certainly do what they can to obtain credit for representing a divinely appointed order of the universe; but the pressure of facts is too strong for their pretensions: they are forced to present themselves at last as purely secular expedients for securing human welfare, the one advocating equal distribution of income, and the other private property with free contract, as the secret of general prosperity.

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## CURRENT CONFUSIONS

I COULD go on like this for years; but I think I have now told you enough about Socialism and Capitalism to enable you to follow the struggle between them intelligently. You will find it irritating at first to read the newspapers and listen to the commonplaces of conversation on the subject, knowing all the time that the writers and talkers do not know what they are writing and talking about. The impulse to write to the papers, or intervene in the conversation to set matters right, may be almost irresistible. But it must be resisted, because if you once begin there will be no end to it. You must sit with an air of placid politeness whilst your neighbors, by way of talking politics, denounce the people they do not like as Socialists, Bolsheviks, Syndicalists, Anarchists, and Communists on the one side, and Capitalists, Imperialists, Fascists, Reactionaries, and Bourgeois on the other, none of them having an idea of the meaning of these words clear enough to be called without flattery the ghost of a notion. A hundred years ago they would have called one another Jacobins, Radicals, Chartists, Republicans, Infidels, and even, to express the lowest depth of infamy, Co-operators; or, contrariwise, Tories, Tyrants, Bloated Aristocrats, and Fundholders. None of these names hurt now: Jacobins and Chartists are forgotten; republics are the rule and not the exception in Europe as well as in America; Co-operators are as respectable

as Quakers; Bloated Aristocracy is the New Pauperism; and the proletariat, with its millions invested in Savings Certificates and Savings Bank deposits, would not at all object to being described as having money "in the funds", if that expression were still current. But the names in the mouths of the factions mean nothing anyhow. They are mere electioneering vituperation. In France at elections the Opposition posters always exhort the electors to vote against Assassins and Thieves (meaning the Cabinet); and the Government posters "feature" precisely the same epithets, whilst the candidates in their own homes call their pet dogs Bandits when pretending to scold them. It all means nothing. They had much better call each other Asses and Bitches (they sometimes do, by the way), because everyone knows that a man is not an ass nor a woman a bitch, and that calling them so is only a coarse way of insulting them; whereas most people do not know what the words Bolshevik, Anarchist, Communist, and so forth mean, and are too easily frightened into believing that they denote every imaginable extremity of violence and theft, rapine and murder. The Russian word Bolshevik, which has such a frightful sound to us, means literally nothing more than a member of a parliamentary majority; but as an English epithet it is only the political form of Bogey or Blackguard or the popular Bloody, denoting simply somebody or something with whom the speaker disagrees.

But the names we hurl at one another are much less confusing than the names we give ourselves. For instance, quite a lot of people, mostly a very amiable mild sort of people, call themselves Communist-Anarchists, which Conservatives interpret as Double-Dyed Scoundrels. This is very much as if they called themselves Roman Catholic Protestants or Christian Jewesses, or undersized giantesses, or brunette blondes, or married maids, or any other flat contradiction in terms; for Anarchism preaches the obliteration of statute law and the abolition of Governments and States, whilst Communism preaches that all the necessary business of the country shall be done by public bodies and regulated by public law. Nobody could logically be in favor of both all the time. But there is a muddled commonsense in the name for all that. What the Communist-Anarchist really means is that she is willing to be a Communist as to the work and obedience to public law for everybody that is necessary to keep the community healthy and solvent, and that then she wants to be let go her own way. It is her manner of saying that she needs leisure and freedom as well as taskwork and responsibility: in short, as I have heard it expressed, that she does

not want to be "a blooming bee". That is the attitude of all capable women; but to apply the term Communist-Anarchism to it is so confusing, and so often perversely adopted by the kind of muddler who, being against law and public enterprise because she wants to be free, and against freedom because freedom of contract is a capitalist device for exploiting the proletariat, spends her life in obstructing both Socialism and Capitalism and never getting anywhere, that, on the whole, I should not call myself a Communist-Anarchist if I were you.

The truth is, we live in a Tower of Babel where a confusion of names prevents us from finishing the social edifice. The Roman Catholic who does not know what his Church teaches, the member of the Church of England who would repudiate several of the Thirty-Nine Articles if they were propounded to her without a hint of where they came from, the Liberal who has never heard of the principles of the Manchester School and would not have understood them if she had, and the Tory who is completely innocent of De Quincey's Logic of Political Economy: that is to say, the vast majority of Catholics, Protestants, Liberals, and Tories, have their counterparts in the Socialists, the Communists, the Syndicalists, the Anarchists, the Laborists, who denounce Capitalism and middle class morality, and are saturated with both all the time. The Intelligent Woman, as she reads the newspapers, must allow for this as best she can. She must not only remember that every professing Socialist is not necessarily a Trade Unionist, and cannot logically be an Anarchist, but is sometimes so little a Socialist that when entrusted with public business enough to bring her face to face with the Conservative or Liberal leaders she has been denouncing, she will be flattered to find that these eminent persons are quite of her real way of thinking, and vote with them enthusiastically every time.

The name Communist is at the present moment (1927) specially applied to and adopted by those who believe that Capitalism will never be abolished by constitutional parliamentary means in the Fabian manner, but must be overthrown by armed revolution and supplanted by the Muscovite Marxist Church. This is politely called the policy of Direct Action. Conservative Richards who advocate a forcible usurpation of the government by the capitalists as such call it a *coup d'état*. But a proletarian may be an advocate of Direct Action without being a bit of a Communist. She may believe that the mines should belong to the miners, the railway to the railwaymen, the army to the soldiers, the churches to the clergy-



men, and the ships to the crews. She may even believe that the houses should belong to the housemaids, especially if she is a housemaid herself. Socialism will not hear of this. It insists that industries shall be owned by the whole community, and regulated in the interests of the consumer (or customer), who must be able to buy at cost price without paying a profit to anybody. A shop, for instance, must not belong to the shop assistants, nor be exploited by them for their profit: it must be run for the benefit of the customers, the shop assistant's safeguard against finding herself sacrificed to the customer being that she is herself a customer at the other shops, and the customer herself a worker in other establishments. When incomes are equal, and everyone is both a producer and a consumer, the producers and consumers may be trusted to treat each other fairly from self-love if from no more generous motive; but until then, to make any industry the property of the workers in it would be merely to replace the existing idle joint stock shareholders by working shareholders profiteering on a much larger scale, as they would appropriate the rent of their sites and make none of those contributions to a central exchequer for the benefit of the nation that now take place under parliamentary rule. The inequalities of income between, say, miners in the richest mines and farmers on the poorest soils would be monstrous. But I need not plague you with arguments: the arrangement is impossible anyhow; only, as several of the proletarian proposals and cries of the day, including Trade Unionism, Producers' Co-operation, Workers' Control, Peasant Proprietorship, and the cruder misunderstandings of Syndicalism and Socialism, are either tainted or saturated with it to such an extent that it wrecked the proletarian movement in Italy after the war and led to the dictatorship of Signor Mussolini, and as it is often supposed to be part of Socialism you had better beware of it; for it has many plausible pseudo-socialistic disguises. It is really only Poor Man's Capitalism, like Poor Man's Gout.

On their negative side the proletarian Isms are very much alike: they all bring the same accusations against Capitalism; and Capitalism makes no distinction between them because they agree in their hostility to it. But there is all the difference in the world between their positive remedies; and any woman who voted for Syndicalism or Anarchism or Direct Action disguised as Communism indiscriminately under the impression that she was voting for Socialism would be as mistaken as one who voted for Conservatism or Liberalism or Imperialism or the Union Jack or King

and Country or Church and State indiscriminately under a general impression that she was voting against Socialism.

And so you have the curious spectacle of our Parliamentary Labor Party, led by Socialists who are all necessarily Communists in principle, and are advocating sweeping extensions of Communism, expelling the so-called Communist Party from its ranks, refusing to appear on the same platforms with its members in public, and being denounced by it as bourgeois reactionaries. It is most confusing until you know; and then you see that the issue just now between the rival proletarian parties in England is not Communism against Socialism: it is constitutional action, or Fabianism as it used to be called, against Direct Action followed by a dictatorship. And as Diehard Capitalism is now sorely tempted to try a British-Fascist *coup d'état* followed by a dictatorship, as opposed to Liberal constitutional Capitalism, the confusion and disunion are by no means all on the Labor side. The extremists of the Right and those of the Left are both propagandists of impatient disgust with Parliament as an institution. There is a Right wing of the Right just as there is a Left wing of the Left; whilst the Constitutional Centre is divided between Capitalism and Socialism. You will need all your wits about you to find out where you are and keep there during the coming changes.

The proletarian party inherits from Trade Unionism the notion that the strike is the classic weapon and the only safeguard of proletarian labor. It is therefore dangerously susceptible to the widespread delusion that if instead of a coal strike here and a railway strike there, a lightning strike of waitresses in a restaurant today, and a lightning strike of match girls in a factory tomorrow, all the workers in all the occupations were to strike simultaneously and sympathetically, Capitalism would be brought to its knees. This is called The General Strike. It is as if the crew of a ship, oppressed by its officers, were advised by a silly-clever cabin boy to sink the ship until all the officers and their friends the passengers were drowned, and then take victorious command of it. The objection that the crew could not sail the ship without navigating officers is superfluous, because there is the conclusive preliminary objection that the crew would be drowned, cabin boy and all, as well as the officers. In a General Strike ashore the productive proletarians would be starved before the employers, capitalists, and parasitic proletarians, because these would have possession of the reserves of spare food. It would be national suicide.

Obvious as this is, the General Strike has been attempted again

and again, notably on one occasion in Sweden, when it was very thoroughly tried out; and though it has always necessarily collapsed, it is still advocated by people who imagine that the remedy for Capitalism is to treat labor as the capital of the proletariat (that is, the spare money of those who have no money), and to hold up the Capitalists by threat of starvation just as the Capitalists have hitherto held up the proletariat. They forget that the capitalists have never yet been so absurd as to attempt a general lock-out. It would be much more sensible to support a particular strike by calling all other strikes off, thus isolating the particular employers aimed at, and enabling all the other workers to contribute to the strike fund. But we have already discussed the final impossibility of tolerating even particular strikes or lock-outs, much less general ones. They will pass away as duelling has passed away. Meanwhile be on your guard against propagandists of the General Strike; but bear in mind too that the term is now being used so loosely in the daily papers that we see it applied to any strike in which more than one trade is concerned.

A favorite plea of the advocates of the General Strike is that it could prevent a war. Now it may be admitted that the fear of an attempt at it does to some extent restrain governments from declaring unpopular wars. Unfortunately once the first fellow-countryman is killed or the first baby bombed, no war is unpopular: on the contrary, it is as well known to our Capitalist governments as it was to that clever lady the Empress Catherine of Russia that when the people become rebellious there is nothing like "a nice little war" for bringing them to heel again in a patriotic ecstasy of loyalty to the Crown. Besides, the fundamental objection to the general strike, that when everybody stops working the nation promptly perishes, applies just as fatally to a strike against war as to a strike against a reduction of wages. It is true that if the vast majority in the belligerent nations, soldiers and all, simultaneously became conscientious objectors, and the workers all refused to do military service of any kind, whether in the field or in the provisioning, munitioning, and transport of troops, no declaration of war could be carried out. Such a conquest of the earth by Pacifism seems rudely and desirably to many of us; but the mere statement of these conditions is sufficient to shew that they do not constitute a general strike, and that they are so unlikely to occur that no sane person would act on the chance of their being realized. A single schoolboy militarist dropping a bomb from an airplane into a group of children will make an end of local pacifism: in an instant

until it becomes certain that the bomber and his employers will be called to account before a competent and dreaded tribunal. Meanwhile the fear of a so-called General Strike against war will never deter any bellicose Government from equipping and commissioning such adventurous young aces. But no Government dare send them if it knew that it would be blockaded by a combination of other nations sufficiently strong to intimidate the most bellicose single nation.

The formation of such a combination is the professed object of the present League of Nations; and though there is no sign so far of the leading military Powers even consulting it, much less obeying and supporting it, when they have any weighty military interests at stake, still even their military interests will force them sooner or later to take the League seriously, substitute supernational morality, law, and action, for the present international anarchism, according to which it is proper for nations, under certain forms, to murder and plunder foreigners, though it is a crime for them to murder and plunder one another. No other method of preventing war so far discovered is worth your attention. It is very improbable even that our quaint and illogical toleration of conscientious objection during the last war will ever be repeated; and in any case the experiment proved its futility as a preventive of war. The soldier in the trenches will always ask why he should be shot for refusing to go "over the top" when his brother at home is spared after refusing even to enter the trench. The General Strike is still more futile. War cannot be stopped by the refusal of individuals or even of whole trades to take part in it: nothing but combinations of nations, each subordinating what they call their sovereign rights to the world's good, or at least to the good of the combination, can prevail against it.

This subordination of nationalism is called supernationalism, and might be called catholicism if that word could be freed from misleading historical associations. It already exists in the United States of America, which are federated for certain purposes, including currency and a *pax Americana* which was established at the cost of a fierce war. There is no reason except pure devilment why the States of Europe, or, to begin with, a decisive number of them, should not federate to the same extent for the same purposes. The Empires are changing into Commonwealths, or voluntary federations, for common human purposes. Here, and not in local anti-patriotic strikes, are the real hopes of peace.

You will find constitutional changes specially bothersome because

of the continual clashing between the tightening-up of social discipline demanded by Socialism and the jealousy of official power and desire to do what we like which we call Democracy. Democracy has a very strong hold on organized labor. In the Trade Unions every device is tried to make the vote of the whole union supreme. When delegates vote at the Union Congresses they are allowed a vote for every member of their respective unions; and as far as possible the questions on which they cast their hundreds of thousands of votes are settled beforehand in the unions by the votes of the members; so that when the delegates go to Congress they are not representatives but mere spokesmen handing in the decisions of their unions. But these crude democratic precautions defeat their own object. In practice, a Trade Union secretary is the nearest thing on earth to an irremovable autocrat. The "card vote" is not called for except to decide questions on which the decisions could not be carried out unless the delegates of the Big Powers of trade unionism (that is, the unions whose membership runs into millions) could outvote the delegates of the Little Powers; and as in the ranks of Labor not only is "the career open to the talents" but absolutely closed to nonentities, the leaders are much more arbitrary than they would be in the House of Lords, where the hereditary peers may include persons of average or less than average ability. Even the humblest Trade Union secretary must have exceptional business ability and power of managing people; and if anyone but a secretary obtains a delegation to a Congress he must have at least a talent for self-assertion. He may be for all public purposes an idiot; but he must be a fairly blatant idiot, and to some extent a representative one, or he could never persuade large bodies of his equals to pick him out from the obscurity of his lot.

Now as this oligarchy of bureaucrats and demagogues is the result of the most jealous democracy, the oligarchs of labor are determined to maintain the system which has placed them in power. You must have noticed that some of the most imperiously wilful women, unable to bear a moment's contradiction, and tyrannizing over their husbands, daughters, and servants until nobody else in the house can call her soul her own, have been the most resolute opponents of Women's Rights. The reason is that they know that as long as the men govern they can govern the men. Just so a good many of the ablest and most arbitrary of the leaders of Trade Unionism are resolutely democratic in Labor politics because they know very well that as long as the workers can vote they can make the workers vote as they please. They are democrats, not because

of their faith in the judgment, knowledge, and initiative of the masses, but because of their experience of mass ignorance, gullibility, and sheepishness. It is only the idealists of the propertied and cultivated middle classes who believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God: the typical proletarian leader is a cynic in this matter, believing secretly that the working folk will have to be born again and born differently before they can be safely allowed to have their own silly way in public affairs: indeed it is to make this rebirth possible that the leaders are Socialists. They have often been strongly anti-Socialist. Thus both the cynics and the idealists are strenuous defenders of democracy, and regard the series of enfranchisements of the people which began with the Conservative Act of 1867 and culminated in Votes for Women, as a glorious page in the history of the emancipation of mankind from tyranny and oppression, instead of a reduction to absurdity of the notion that giving slaves votes to defend their political rights and redress their wrongs is much wiser than giving razors to infants for the same purpose.

The naked truth is that democracy, or government by the people through votes for everybody, has never been a complete reality; and to the very limited extent to which it has been a reality it has not been a success. The extravagant hopes which have been attached to every extension of it have been disappointed. A hundred years ago the great Liberal Reform Bill was advocated as if its passage into law would produce the millennium. Only the other day the admission of women to the electorate, for which women fought and died, was expected to raise politics to a nobler plane and purify public life. But at the election which followed, the women voted for hanging the Kaiser; rallied hysterically round the worst male candidates; threw out all the women candidates of tried ability, integrity, and devotion; and elected just one titled lady of great wealth and singular demagogic fascination, who, though she justified their choice subsequently, was then a beginner. In short, the notion that the female voter is more politically intelligent or gentler than the male voter proved as great a delusion as the earlier delusions that the business man was any wiser politically than the country gentleman, or the manual worker than the middle class man. If there were any disfranchised class left for our democrats to pin their repeatedly disappointed hopes on, no doubt they would still clamor for a fresh set of votes to jump the last ditch into their Utopia; and the vogue of democracy might last a while yet. Possibly there may be here and there lunatics looking forward to votes

for children, or for animals, to complete the democratic structure. But the majority shows signs of having had enough of it. Discipline for Everybody and Votes for Nobody is the fashion in Spain and Italy; and for some years past in Russia the proletarian Government has taken no more notice of an adverse vote than the British Raj of an Indian jury's verdict, except when it turns the majority out of doors in the manner of Bismarck or Cromwell.

These reactions of disgust with democracy are natural enough where Capitalism, having first produced a huge majority of proletarians with no training in management, responsibility, or the handling of big money, nor any notion of the existence of such a thing as political science, gives this majority the vote for the sake of gaining party advantages by popular support. Even in ancient Greece, where our proletarians were represented by slaves, and only what we call the middle and upper classes voted, there was the same reaction, which is hardly surprising in view of the fact that one of the famous feats of Athenian democracy was to execute Socrates for using his superior brains to expose its follies.

Nevertheless, I advise you to stick to your vote as hard as you can, because though its positive effects may do you more harm than good, its negative effect may be of great value to you. If one candidate is a Socratic person, and the other a fool who attracts you by echoing your own follies and giving them an air of patriotism and virtuous indignation, you may vote for the fool, that being as near as you can get to executing Socrates; and so far your vote is all to the bad. But the fact that your vote, though only one among many thousands, may conceivably turn the scale at an election, secures you a consideration in Parliament which it would be mad and cowardly for you to relinquish as long as inequality of income prevents you from being really represented by the members of the Government. Therefore cling to it tooth and nail, however unqualified you may be to make a wise use of it.

The Labor Party is in a continual dilemma on this point. At the election of 1918 the leader of the Labor Party, a steadfast supporter of votes for women, knew quite well that he would be defeated in his old constituency by the vote of the suburban ladies; and he was. The Labor Party, confronted by a scheme for making Parliament more representative of public opinion by securing due representation for minorities (called Proportional Representation), finds itself forced to oppose it lest it should break Parliament up into a host of squabbling groups and make parliamentary government impossible. All reformers who use democracy as a stepping stone to

power find it a nuisance when they get there. The more power the people are given the more urgent becomes the need for some rational and well-informed superpower to dominate them and disable their inveterate admiration of international murder and national suicide. Voltaire said that there is one person wiser than Mrs Anybody, and that is Mrs Everybody; but Voltaire had not seen modern democracy at work: the democracy he admired in England was a very exclusive oligarchy; and the mixture of theocracy and hereditary autocracy that disgusted him in France was not a fair test of aristocracy, or government by the best qualified. We now know that though Mrs Everybody knows where the shoe pinches and must therefore have a say in the matter, she cannot make the shoe, and cannot tell a good shoemaker from a bad one by his output of hot air on a platform. Government demands ability to govern: it is neither Mrs Everybody's business nor Mrs Anybody's, but Mrs Somebody's. Mrs Somebody will never be elected unless she is protected from the competition of Mrs Noodle and Mrs Bounder and Mrs Noisy Nobody and Mrs King-and-Country and Mrs Class War and Mrs Hearth-and-Home and Mrs Bountiful and Mrs Hands-off-the-Church and Mrs Please-I-want-everybody-to-love-me. If democracy is not to ruin us we must at all costs find some trustworthy method of testing the qualifications of candidates before we allow them to seek election. When we have done that we may have great trouble in persuading the right people to come forward. We may even be driven to compel them; for those who fully understand how heavy are the responsibilities of government and how exhausting its labor are the least likely to shoulder them voluntarily. As Plato said, the ideal candidate is the reluctant one. When we discover such a test you will still have your electoral choice between several Mrs Somebodies, which will make them all respect you; but you will not be taken in by Mrs Noodle and Co. because they will not be eligible for election. Meanwhile, Heaven help us! we must do the best we can.

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## SOVIETISM

IN the ten years that have passed since this book was written an extraordinary event has put its precepts to a severe practical test. The vastest single State in the world, covering a sixth of the earth's surface, with a growing population of more than 175 millions, has thrown over Capitalism and substituted Communism as its policy and principle. Its prophet is Karl Marx, whose works were its text-



books and its gospel. Our British post-Marxian literature of Socialism was either unknown or disregarded; and this book was unwritten.

The first results were appalling. The change took place in 1917; and by 1920 the condition of the former Russian Empire, now called the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), was so desperate that it seemed to be a warning to the whole world against the alleged wickedness and impossibility of Socialism. Yet now, nearly twenty years later, Russia is an example to all the world of the enormous superiority of Socialism to Capitalism economically, socially, and politically. And this is not through the skilful administration and business capacity of her very able and devoted leaders, but in spite of every mistake their inexperience could possibly make, and every folly their technically uninstructed idealism could tempt them to. Their ineptitude seems more disastrous than it really was because instead of hushing up their blunders and hoodwinking the people as the Capitalist practice is, they were their own most vociferous and derisive critics, and had no sooner found out their errors than they shouted the news from every loud speaker in the country, and changed their course or even went full speed astern with a promptitude inconceivable by our House of Commons, which would have taken many years to make much smaller changes and in the end only pretended to make them.

It was partly their fault for idolizing Karl Marx, and despising his Fabian successors as bourgeois, very carelessly, as they were all bourgeois themselves. Marx is among the prophets, perhaps among the greatest of them; but prophets are very incompetent guides to the art of running a business. Mahomet was a mighty prophet; but when he was called upon to make a calendar he divided the year into twelve lunar months, and presently had the spring caravans starting in midwinter, and the weather seditiously and blasphemously refusing to conform to his calendar. When consulted as to the use of mountains, he explained that they are great weights placed on the earth by God to prevent its being blown away.

Jesus was another great prophet; but his apostles had trouble with Ananias and Sapphira just as he himself had trouble with Judas Iscariot. Robert Owen, with his prophetic vision of a New Moral World, was an experienced and most successful man of business who had made a fortune as a philanthropic mill owner; yet he made a hopeless mess of the labor exchanges and Socialist colonies which he and his followers attempted to substitute for the Capitalist system at its very worst.

Karl Marx's closest friend was Friedrich Engels, who is hardly second to him now in Russian veneration; and Engels was in factory business in Manchester, successfully enough to enable him to support the Marx family as well as himself. The two were joint authors of the famous Communist Manifesto, one of the most momentous of our modern Scriptures. They both classed Owen as an "unscientific Socialist", which he certainly was; but they did not realize how very unscientific they were themselves.

You may remember how we have seen, in chapter 75 of this book, how vitally important it is that a government, however convinced of the evil of private property and profiteering private enterprise, must not confiscate the one nor stop the other until it is ready to carry on and find employment for all concerned without checking their productivity for a moment. Otherwise nothing will happen but unemployment and national impoverishment.

Special care must be taken of the managers. As we have seen in Chapter 42, industry under modern conditions is carried on by bodies of workers who can work as long as they are told what to do, and provided with materials and machines and factories. There must be not only this body of workers under direction, but an organizing and clerical staff, ranging from typists and commonplace business bosses to mathematicians and chemists of high scientific attainments. Factory "hands", as they are called, are like a ship's crew out of sight of land: they cannot tell which way to steer unless they have a captain and officers who can use mathematical instruments and make astronomical observations. When such persons have to use their exceptional powers on behalf of the landlords and profiteers, they treat the rank and file whose labor they direct as an inferior class, sometimes with ruthless cruelty and almost always with more or less insolence. Consequently after a successful revolution the temptation to kick them into the street as enemies of the people is strong. Priests who have been tyrannous or snobbish are in the same danger. But unless the revolutionary government has capable substitutes ready to carry on, the temptation must be resisted. If a ship's crew mutinies on the high seas and kills its officers the ship will drift until both ship and crew perish from wreck or starvation or both. A five thousand acre farm may be very successfully run by a very grasping farmer, or perhaps by his wife. If he is driven out by a revolt of his laborers, it may serve him right for his greed and cruelty; but the farm will become a wilderness in a surprisingly short time, and the laborers will lose their jobs.

There is another consideration which governments must not lose

sight of. When a government pays a person to do a certain job for the public, that person will, if possible, delay or neglect the job until the public pays him over again by a tip of some kind. From the few pence which a park attendant will exact from a football player to the hundred or thousand pounds which a ministerial paymaster can impudently exact from a contractor who is in a hurry for his money, this kind of corruption is so inveterate in men brought up under Capitalism that it is commonly said of the civil services of certain States that every official lives by stealing the salary of his nearest subordinate, who does likewise until the corruption reaches those who have no subordinate and are in direct contact with the public.

And finally there is the tradition that a government job is a sinecure, and that its holder may with impunity be grossly insolent to the public and do as nearly as possible nothing for his salary.

The Tsardom was abolished in Russia in 1917 by a liberal revolution which substituted parliamentary government. This, as usual, let loose floods of oratory without making matters any better. Russia is a country of peasants, and these peasants had been drafted into the army to fight in the war of 1914-18 as the auxiliaries of France and England, where we talked of them as 'the Russian steamroller.' By 1917 all the national enthusiasm which is so effective in the first march to the front had evaporated. The supply of volunteers had tumbled in England, and men had to be forced into the trenches by the establishment of compulsory military service. The British conscripts were fully equipped and more regularly fed than many of them had ever been fed before, whilst their wives had allowances which made life easier for them than it had been under peace conditions. Not until eleven years after the armistice did they feel the full force of the bankruptcy into which the war had plunged the world, though they had had a sharp foretaste of it in 1920. But the Russian soldiers had no such luck. Many of them were unarmed and unequipped, all of them were more or less starved. The war was incomprehensible to them, all they knew was that it had been started by the murder of a foreign monarch in Berlin, which was nothing to them. By 1917 they were being defeated and slaughtered in all directions by the well-organized German army. In desperation they deserted in great numbers, and finally plucked up courage to organize themselves into committees to supersede or control their officers. But as the committees could do nothing to stop the defeat and starvation, the revolted soldier at last simply came home to their farms when they possessed any, or to agricultural employment when they could find it, but mostly to fill the streets of Petrograd

with hordes of half-disciplined unemployed crying for peace at any price and land at any cost.

Meanwhile the new Liberal government talked and talked and went on with the war as if nothing had changed. Thereupon the German Government, to throw the Russian Government into the utmost possible confusion, let loose on them a certain Marxian Communist known as Lenin, who presently turned out to be no mere firebrand, but the greatest statesman of his time. Lenin promised peace to the soldiers and sailors, and immediately found himself the idol of the army and navy. To the peasants, who were mostly only the soldiers over again, he promised land. And with these forces at his back, and a bit of luck which consisted mainly in the futility of his parliamentary Liberal opponents headed by a remarkable orator named Kerensky, he swept the Kerenskyite government out of existence as a government, and finally out of the country. He redeemed his first promise by making peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk at the cost of surrendering Russian Poland and the Baltic provinces to be established as independent republics, and of being furiously denounced by the Allies—even by the most revolutionary Socialists among them—as a deserter who had sold out to the common enemy of Europe, then supposed to be the Central German empires.

Now please notice the predicament in which this transaction left Lenin and his little group of Marxist Communists. They cared for nothing but Communism; yet they had been raised to power by peasants and soldiers and sailors who knew no more of Communism than of mathematics, and whose demands were not only for peace, which has nothing to do with Communism one way or another, but for peasant proprietorship, which is the most intense and bigoted form of fundamental private property. It was with this sort of popular support that a handful of men (there was only one woman in their official councils) managed to impose on Russia the largest army in the world and an agricultural system in which collective farming is the main part of every agricultural worker's routine. Even the most unchangeable and incorrigible of the old moujiks have seen their children nursed and fed and schooled into persons quite different from themselves, and indeed as incapable of living like themselves as a hunter or a racehorse of stabling in a pigsty.

But the process of trial and error by which this result was arrived at, though very much briefer and kindlier than the process by which England was starved into accepting the Capitalist development of modern machine industry, was pretty bad. For years hordes of lost

and deserted children, the aftermath of the war, wandered about Russia in little gangs, begging and stealing, following the seasons like migrating birds, sleeping out the winter nights in the hot vessels from which the streets had been asphalted during the day, but always, it seems, faithfully dividing their plunder equally between the biggest and littlest. The ministers of education were unremitting in their efforts to capture and reclaim these small bandits, who, when they were caught, ran away again and again before they could be persuaded that a disciplined life was really freer and happier than a wild one. Even when reclaimed they remained nomadic and had to be put to travelling work. They were resourceful, and some of them rose to public posts. But these were only the survivors from thousands who must have perished miserably from disease, exposure, and starvation.

At present there is not a hungry child in the fully sovietized region of Russia, nor a ragged one, nor one who is not getting all the education it is capable of. Lenin knew that Communism must depend finally on such a generation as the world had never seen before; and under the rule he established though the adults had at first to tighten their belts and work hard on a daily bowl of cabbage soup with a lump of black bread (nutritious stuff, but monotonous and only just enough of it—in fact the Russians lived on hope as much as on their common grub), the children were fed like lords and cultivated regardless of expense. The result is that on a comparison of recent statistics with those of certain investigations made under the Tsardom boys and girls of sixteen nurse under Communism are now two inches taller and four pounds heavier than children of the same age born in the bad old days.

As I write these lines English schoolmasters in conference are giving terrible descriptions of the condition of the boys they have to teach in our distressed areas in unheated schools, miserably underfed, and bearing all the marks of famine on their stunted bodies. But our great daily newspapers do not bother about the schoolmasters nor the protests in Parliament, but sedulously propagate the belief that the Russians are crushed under a horrible slavery whilst the British are free and prosperous because exports increased by two per cent last week.

It is however of the mistakes of the Bolsheviks that I had better speak, for if we change over to the Russian system here, which circumstances will force us to do if we are to save our civilization, we shall certainly, unless we study our ground in the light of Soviet experience, rush into just the same mistakes and follies as the Rus-

sians under their ablest and most devoted leaders. We shall even do worse, for the Bol-sheviks had read Marx and knew what they were doing even when they did not know how to do it, whereas, as likely or not, our leaders would be political opportunists who had never read anything, and would trust to muddling through from one difficulty to another in a condition of complete bewilderment and recalcitrance until they were rudely thrown out of power by relays of enthusiasts who would make all the Marxian mistakes instead of the Old School Tie mistakes.

First, then, the Bolsheviks, being clear on Marxian principles that private trading for profit must be abolished, drove all the private traders out of the shops as Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple, confiscating their stores and actually heaping them up in the Kremlin so that when the sculptress Clare Sheridan rode to Moscow on a motor bicycle in winter to make busts of Lenin and his colleagues, he handed her a fur cloak which happened to be among the spoils of the shops. Consequently there were no shops open in Moscow, and presently there were no streets, if a street means a paved passage way. Of course people had to sell and buy, so they stood about in the streets and market places, where noblewomen hawked their jewels in the gutter with the other pedlars, and went home to the houses they now had to share with proletarians who thought nothing of sleeping ten in a room if only the room was large enough to hold them. And as there was no longer any responsible owner of the house to keep it in repair its condition soon became deplorable. Lifts ceased to work, electric light ceased to illuminate, sanitary arrangements were indescribable. Mr H. G. Wells visited the Russian capitals at that time, and his description, and those of Clare Sheridan and others, shew us the little they saw (for their housing and entertainment were the best the authorities could do for them), and left them with no illusions as to what was left to be guessed. I was myself offered a very handsome commission by Mr William Randolph Hearst to go out to Russia and describe what there was to see there, but I refused because I knew only too well that what I should see was Capitalism in ruins and not Communism *in excelsis*. Not until 1931 did I visit the U.S.S.R., and by that time the tide had turned. For ten days I lived and travelled in perfect comfort (they treated me as if I were Karl Marx himself) and found no such horrors as I could have found in the distressed areas and slums of the Capitalist west, though the Soviet Government was still finding out its mistakes.

Fortunately mistakes are not hushed up in Russia: they are at-

tacked and remedied with uncompromising vigor; for there are no capitalist vested interests to be conciliated. After a few years of indescribable ruin and confusion, during which, however, Russia never ceased to fill her workers with the hope and self-respect that contrasts so strongly with the dull resignation or cynical despair of elderly capitalist proletarians, Lenin publicly told his colleagues that though their revolutionary principles were beyond praise they knew less about the practical conduct of business than a Capitalist office boy. He was learning from bitter experience what he might have learnt from the English Fabians if they had been included in the Marxian canon instead of being placed on the index as *petit bourgeois*: namely, that you must not destroy private profiteering until you have made the nation independent of it by public trade. He had to announce the famous N.E.P., or New Economic Policy, by which private traders were allowed to carry on until further notice and be thenceforth known opprobriously as *Nepmen*. There was great exultation in the Capitalist countries over this measure, which was supposed to be a breakdown of Communism and a return to Capitalism.

Before this, when things were at their worst, the Capitalist Powers, who persisted in pretending that the overthrown Liberal parliament was the real Government in Russia and the Soviet a nest of brigands, attempted to restore Capitalism there by arming and financing a royalist insurrection. England headed the list of subscribers by contributing a hundred millions which stood over from what Parliament had voted for the European war, and which Mr Winston Churchill, who was then Secretary of State for War, handed over in the full conviction that he had the hearty support of every honest and decent person in the British Isles. He was, I have no doubt, genuinely astonished when a "Hands off Russia" movement warned him that his anti-Red fury was not shared by the whole electorate. Open war on Russia, or indeed on any country, was not possible: the Powers were too exhausted by their efforts in 1914-18 to begin again. What they could do, and did, was to back up a series of royalist raids into Russia led by generals and admirals of the old dynasty. At first it seemed as if the Soviet must fall. After the capture of Kazan by the raiders (called the White Army) the position of the Bolsheviks seemed desperate. The capture of Petersburg (absurdly re-named Leningrad, but still called by its old and proper name) seemed at one time only a few hours off. Yet within two years the raiders were completely defeated; and the victorious Red Army was clothed in the British boots and khaki, and armed with

the British weapons, which Mr Churchill had supplied for their destruction. To understand how this came about, we must turn to the land question.

When Lenin came into power on his promise of land and peace to the peasants and soldiers he provided the peace by surrendering at discretion to the German army and withdrawing from the war. But the land question was a harder nut to crack. It was easy to say "the land is nationalized: take it and hang the landlords if necessary: the Soviet will see you through". The peasants drove the landlords away or killed them, and plundered or burnt their country houses. They formed Soviets; divided the land; and carried on their vital business of food production. But peasants are ferocious individualists; and when they found that the central Government expected them to contribute all their produce, over and above what they required for their own consumption, to the national stock to feed the urban proletarians, whom they despised and hated, they quite simply refused to produce any surplus, and slaughtered their beasts rather than let them be confiscated to pay their contributions. Attempts at coercion proved impossible; for the final argument of the Moscow police: expulsion, condemnation to work in the mines, or "liquidation" (execution by shooting) all meant killing the goose that was laying the golden eggs when eggs were still very scarce and armies had to be fed to fight the counter-revolution.

But however impervious the peasants were to Marxian principles there was one dread that never left them: the dread that their old landlords might return to oppress them. One of the mysteries that still puzzle the master spirits in Moscow is the apparently miraculous manner in which the death of any of the exiled landlords of the Tsardom is known in the villages over which he formerly ruled long before it reaches the Government. When the counter-revolutionary civil war broke out the peasants understood nothing of it but that it was the attempt of the landlords to come back. That was enough for them. When Trotsky, who had turned out to be a military genius as well as a fiery orator, called for recruits to defend the revolution, the villages sent them out like erupting volcanoes; and the shortage of equipment was made up by stripping their prisoners. Trotsky was the central controller of the campaign: his War Office was a railway carriage which he occupied for eighteen months. The local commanders were not all disposed to be pawns on Trotsky's chess-board. Stalin in particular fought whatever came in his way without regard to Trotsky's plans; and it was impossible to supersede him; for his operations were brilliantly successful. But at last Trotsky told



Lenin that either he or Stalin must go. Lenin managed to arrange matters; but the incident is noteworthy because it marks the beginning of the breach between Trotsky and Stalin which began with the banishment of Trotsky and led later on to conspiracies for which some of the old Bolsheviks had to be executed; for revolutionary habits are hard to change; and it still holds good that one of the first jobs of a successful revolution is to get rid of the revolutionists.

The victory of the Soviet was so complete, in spite of such desperate disadvantages as may never occur again, that the Capitalist crusade had to be abandoned for the moment, except as a bloodless campaign of calumny and spite, the most disgraceful incident in which was the burglary of the Russian co-operators' London office in search of hostile plans and documents which existed only in the imagination of our Old School Tories and their partisans. But the strain on Russia had been enormous. A terrible famine in the Volga district came at just the wrong time. The Powers would not lend Russia money to carry on what they regarded as a war against themselves; besides, the security, though it has since proved to be by far the best in Europe, was then supposed to be the worst. The burden of the nurture and education of the rising generation, which would have been the first to be sacrificed in a Capitalist country, was unflinchingly shouldered by the Soviets as fundamentally more important than fighting; but it was a tremendous addition to the cost of the war.

For this Russian education was a very costly affair. It was not, as with us, a mere business of penning up children in prisons called schools, and turning them out after nine years unable to speak their own language decently or to write a presentable letter, whilst a few with an aptitude for academic studies were given scholarships and sent to one of the universities to be declassed there and pressed into the Capitalist routine. The Russian universities could not have held one per cent of the teeming millions of Russian children even if the university routine had been anything but a hindrance to the education of a Socialist nation. The universities Russia needed were collective farms and polytechnics. But collective farms have to be equipped with innumerable tractors and polytechnics with laboratories full of costly apparatus. These things could not be bought except for money which none of the Powers would lend. Most of them refused to trade on any terms. By hook or crook the Soviet Government had to make things for itself. But nobody in Russia knew how to set about it. The Russian industries were very small relatively to the huge area to be covered. Such as they were they

had been badly damaged by the policy or no policy (called Syndicalism when it was called anything at all) of confiscating the factories, driving out the profiteers, and leaving them in the hands of the operators, who, as readers of Chapter 42 will understand, brought them to a standstill pretty promptly until either the old managers were brought back on one pretext or another, or new managers were found by the Communist Party to pick up their job and carry on as best they might.

Russia was very insufficiently furnished with railways. The moment their confiscation was announced the delusion that a Government job is a sinecure came into play. The country stationmasters began to take things easily at a moment when their utmost energies were required to keep the population alive. Their lazy neglect of urgent orders from the centre drove Djerjinsky, the Minister of Transport, to desperation. He descended personally on one of the delinquents and shot him and his chief of staff. But as ministers had something else to do than go on shooting expeditions even if such work had been endurable to them, it became necessary to organize a police force to deal with the slackers and would-be sinecurists. This was the famous Tcheka, which took over the necessary shooting. Today it is an ordinary department of the Russian Scotland Yard; but in those days its business was to acquire and maintain a reputation for being far more terrible than it actually was.

The Tcheka succeeded in bringing home a sense of responsibility to the public functionaries, who realized under its stern pressure that if they neglected or sabotaged the national work they would probably be shot, whilst if in their zeal they made a mistake they would be at once degraded and replaced by some supposedly more competent person, so that some of them, paralyzed between their fear of doing nothing and of doing something wrong, became useless except as routiners. But though the Tcheka could do this with its pistols as a final argument, it could not create the engineers and electricians who were required in unprecedented numbers.

Still, the Government meant business, and was quite prepared to shoot anyone who by word or deed or writing obstructed it. It imported American Efficiency Engineers, whose business it was to shew employers how to build and equip factories and to manage them. Under American direction factories of steel and glass of the newest type grew like mushrooms in European and Asiatic Russia; and a great age of production on a colossal scale was expected to set in.

Unfortunately, when the factories were ready, and the houses built for their workers, the next step was to turn in ten thousand agricultural peasants and even tribesmen into the factories to work them. Of course they smashed everything. They did not know that a high speed machine needed any more oil than a wheelbarrow. Their notion of assembling machines was to dump all the parts on the floor anyhow and pick out the bits as best they might. When out of an estimated daily output of fifty tractors they managed to produce three or four, the three or four would not tract, and their birth pangs left the machinery wrecked. The waste and wreckage were indescribable. The efficiency engineers wrung their hands, and, on being asked why their factories were producing nothing, sent in a crushing report that the labor conditions were impossible.

But the Government still meant business; and the workers themselves meant business also, though they had no idea of how to go about it. All they needed was someone to shew them the way. The Government accordingly imported Belgians, Germans, Englishmen, and above all Americans, in sufficient numbers to give the required lead; and presently the destruction ceased and the factories began to work productively. Before very long they were working with all-Russian staffs as smoothly as the factories of Detroit or Pittsburg; and stupendous damming and canalling operations were tackled with success, the latter, by the way, being carried out by convicted criminals who found the work much more profitable to them than our wretched prison labor.

Meanwhile the Nepmen helped in their little way to keep things going. So did the Kulaks. The Kulaks were the successful big farmers who could manage large farms with their complements of cattle and horses and hired labor. At first the Bolshevik Government, on Marxian principles, had thrown these exploiters out of their farms neck and crop, with the result, of course, that their farms went to ruin. I well remember a visit I had from one of Tolstoy's daughters, who had gone back to the flourishing countryside where she had been born and brought up, and found it a miserable desert. It was hard for her to forgive the Bolsheviks for that; and she was quite right; for the expulsion of the Kulaks, like the confiscation of the shops, before the Government was ready to carry on, was a stupid anti-Fabian blunder. When the N.E.P. came, the Government had to hunt out the expelled Kulaks and shove them back into their farms with orders to carry on as before until the Revolution was ready for them.

But the Kulaks were not the only victims of Socialist inexperience.

The educated middle classes were lumped together as *Intelligentsia* and placed under a ban. They were denied votes; and their children were to have only what education was left after the manual workers' children had been served. The assumption was that nothing could eradicate the bourgeois habits of mind of these people, and that there was plenty of directive ability in the proletariat which needed only its opportunity to fulfil all the needs of industry. This was true enough as a generalization; but it obscured the fact that natural ability without literacy and some business experience are useless, and that the proletarian habit of mind is just as inappropriate to Communist institutions as the bourgeois habit. The need for white collar workers in the huge extensions of State enterprise far exceeded the primitive proletarian supply, to say nothing of the glaring fact that Lenin, Trotsky, and their colleagues were bourgeois *Intelligentsia* to the backbone. Chicherin, the chief diplomatist of the Soviet (predecessor of Litvinov), was a nobleman of the most exclusive courtly lineage. What was to be done?

The difficulty was got over less candidly than in the case of the *Nepmen*. The white collar posts had to be filled by ladies and gentlemen, quite unmistakable as such; but they were all expected to declare that their fathers worked on the land with their hands. It was actually claimed that the parents of Lenin and Trotsky were peasants. There is no longer any need for this humbug; but it lingered until a new category was invented and called the *Intellectual Proletariat*, leaving the *Intelligentsia* to mean the unfortunate ladies and gentlemen who were not worth employing as white collar workers, or who could not or would not accept or understand the new order. Their lot was wretched, but fortunately their children took to Communism readily enough. As to the parasitic classes, the landlords, the rentiers, the aristocrats, they fled to other countries and lived as best they could in the hope that the old order of things would presently be restored, always excepting those who were clever enough to fit themselves into the new system and to like it better than the old.

An unfortunate exception was the royal family. When it was dethroned by the Liberal revolution, the Kerenskyites did not know what to do with it. To follow the English and French precedents by setting up a revolutionary tribunal and beheading the Tsar would have been too much of a shock to the old royalism, which was still an uncertain quantity, although there was little of it left after the atrocities and military failures of the post-1905 phase of Nicholas the Second's reign. When the Bolsheviks swept away the Liberals

and set about establishing a Communist State they also had nothing to suggest; and the Tsar and his family were left to amuse themselves as best they might in a provincial villa out of reach of the White Army.

Unluckily the local authorities got a serious fright from the approach of a Czecho-Slovakian contingent which was one of the relics of the European war. In that war the Czechs, led by Masaryk, had seized the opportunity to strike for their national independence by joining the Allies in their struggle to break the power of Germany and Austria-Hungary. In the course of the war a Czecho-Slovakian force had managed to get as far as the other end of Asia. It had to make its way home through Russia, where it assumed that its cause --that of the Allies-- was that of the White Army, and that Trotsky's Red Army must be its enemy. Its westward march took it so close to the Tsar's villa in Ekaterinburg that it seemed likely to rescue him; and this his custodians were determined to prevent at all costs.

They proceeded with a curious and historically unprecedented combination of ruthlessness with a desire to spare their victims any avoidable suffering. Knowing that the Tsar was very pious, they (being themselves all fanatical Marxian Materialists) lulled him into a condition of happy spiritual calm by sending for a special choir for a special service of the Greek Church at the country house, after which the royal family were informed that it had been decided to remove them and that they must prepare for a journey. They were assembled in a room to wait for the cars, under no apprehension whatever of anything worse than a night journey. Suddenly a firing party came into the room. The Tsar was shot before he had time to realize what was happening, and within thirty seconds his wife, his son, and his three daughters were also dead. Their bodies were then taken into the forest, where they were saturated with kerosene and completely destroyed by fire.

It was certainly the most merciful regicide known to history; but in the light of the crushing victory of the Soviet Government later on it is not at all clear that any harm worth mentioning would have been done to the Soviet cause if the Czecho-Slovakian contingent had carried the royal family off to Prague and lodged them in a castle on the Danube as an addition to the growing list of ex-monarchs and Pretenders, young and old, who satisfy tourist curiosity but do not rouse enthusiasm enough to threaten fresh Cullodens or Waterloos. So the execution may be classed as a mistake. Apparently the humane Lenin thought so, but attached no importance to it.

However, I am here concerned with those mistakes only which

might have been avoided if Soviet Socialism had been up-to-date, and which are likely to be repeated in future instalments of the impending change-over from a Capitalist world to a Communist one if its agents have no better business technique than can be gathered from a mixture of nineteenth-century Liberalism, anti-clericalism, and Marxism.

In any case they must be prepared to deal with the psychological phenomenon of sabotage. Under Capitalism every plumber who does a repair job in your house has a direct pecuniary interest in playing some trick that will ensure another breakdown and another job for himself presently. But what happened in Russia was that the saboteurs, in a fury of spite against Bolshevism, deliberately did as much mischief as possible to machinery, falsified accounts, and even destroyed the seeds on which their next season's harvest depended. This, however, is accountable enough. People in comfortable circumstances, knowing nothing about Marxism or Capitalism, and seeing no connection between their comfort and the misery of the proletariat, were suddenly and violently invaded in their homes by insurgent proletarians in search of house room, their incomes confiscated, the respect paid to them as ladies and gentlemen withdrawn and replaced by contempt, their children refused schooling until the children of the poor were served, the parliamentary franchise taken away from them, and their condition generally depressed beneath that of the roughest manual laborers, or, if they were masterful kulaks with flourishing farms all their own, thrown out because they had three or four horses whilst their despised neighbors had none. It is difficult to imagine their state of mind as other than one of intense vindictive resentment, seeking satisfaction in pure mischief if nothing better is to be had. It is useless to tell these people that if only they will read Karl Marx or Henry George they will see that their sufferings are negligible compared to those endured by the slaves of Capitalism. It only adds to their exasperation to have their wrongs belittled. There are only two ways of dealing with them. One is to hand them over to the Tcheka to be tried as criminals or summarily shot. The other is to make them comfortable again. This is not very easy, as their notions of comfort include the old snobbish respectability and the old deference from laborers and tradesfolk. And it cannot for a long time be carried far enough to take the cutting edge off the rancor which produces sabotage. Happily their children, not being brought up in snobbery, seem to find the new system natural and congenial. Some clever saboteurs have repented and made amends when they came to see

**the advantages of Sovietism; but it is probable that sabotage will continue more or less until the middle class people brought up under the Tsardom have all died out. Had Lenin been Fabian enough to recognize from the beginning the necessity of his N.E.P., most of their tribulations could have been avoided.**

**A less mischievous, but still troublesome state of mind is that produced by the notion that after a revolution everything will be different. Early in the eighties I asked an ardent young Socialist what profession he intended to adopt. He replied in some surprise that he had been convinced by the late Henry Mayers Hyndman, a sanguine Socialist leader at that date, that the revolution would take place in 1889 (the centenary of the French revolution) and that it was therefore unnecessary to adopt any profession. He had somehow transferred the Christian traditions of the Judgment Day and the millennium to the change from Capitalism to Socialism, and was, for the moment, quite taken aback when I pointed out that a Socialist State would need many more professionals and technicians than a Capitalist one.**

**The women who welcomed the revolution - or perhaps I had better say the ladies--were affected differently by this millennial delusion. The more flighty ones believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat would produce general licence in sexual behavior and a repudiation of all the respectable social conventions. The Soviet rulers, though as austere in their own lives as most religious orders, were so far in reaction against authority and coercion of all sorts themselves that at first they tolerated the extravagances of their less sensible lady friends; reformed the moral laws to the extent of making divorce excessively easy; and almost abolished school discipline. But these follies worked so badly that they soon cured themselves; and the tendency at present seems to be rather towards Puritanism than towards the Rabelaisian Abbey of Thelonia, where the motto was "Do as you please". I repeat, however, that I am not here concerned with overdone reactions which cure themselves, and are common to all societies, but with mistakes which, if persisted in, may reproduce some of the evils of Capitalism.**

**Equality of income, which, as we have seen, is the final and essential diagnostic of Communism, is no part of the gospel of Marx, who, preoccupied with the villainies of private property and its exploitation, never faced the problem of optimum distribution. When the N.E.P. failed to produce any acceptable degree of general prosperity, and the Soviet Government became more and more the general employer or regulator of wages, it soon found that produc-**

tion could not be stimulated to the necessary degree by shooting lazy stationmasters and factory workers found drunk at their jobs, nor even by the enthusiasm of the brigades of shock workers who swept through the country setting an example and shewing how to do the work. What was needed was the Capitalist device of piece-work wages, with a grading of labor, each grade carrying a higher wage than the one beneath it; so that a worker, by qualifying himself technically for a higher grade, could at once become better off. In justifying these inequalities some of the Bolshevik leaders still make the elementary mistake of protesting that equality of income is no part of Socialism, and, worse still, actually declare that piece-work and grading are valuations in money of the natural differences in human worth instead of simple inducements to industry. To anyone who has read the seventh chapter of this book such valuations are impossible.

The correct explanation is that no matter what differences in natural ability, or size, or weight, or good looks, or genius, or celebrity there may be between Tom, Dick, and Harry, the cost of feeding, clothing, and lodging them is practically the same. The first step towards equalizing their conditions must be to decide how much the country can afford to give to each of them. In all countries there is at present an enormous equalization of income at the level of unskilled labor. If a Socialist Government tries cutting everyone's income down to that level (which in Russia meant sleeping ten in a room) it discovers at once that it cannot have first-class brain work or authoritative direction under such conditions. Accordingly, as its need for mathematicians and physicists, architects and engineers, planners and thinkers, lawyers and statesmen, strategists and technicians, administrators and bosses for big business, to say nothing of poets, painters, actors, and artists generally, is immediate and absolute, it must fix the distribution level at a figure which will provide for the refinements and comparative seclusion and distinction which are necessary to such persons, and then work up production until that level can be attained by everybody. And if in the process of working up production to that level it is found that the process is hastened by encouraging a worker who is making a flat iron to double his income by making two, or by raising herself (or himself) nearer to the high level by qualifying for a higher technical grade, there is no reason why such expedients should not be tried for all they are worth. The fact that many of them have been invented and employed under Capitalism is rather a recommendation than otherwise, as the Capitalist employers ac-



quired such skill in the art of production that they broke up their system by producing more than they could sell.

But when the level is finally reached, every device of taxation of income, restriction of inheritance, and the like, must be employed with no other object than to keep the entire community intermarriageable on the grounds set forth in Chapter 7 aforesaid, for equality of income and consequently of condition is absolutely essential to the stability of any association of human beings, and intermarriageability is the best test of that.

It is impossible and unnecessary for me to attempt to give here an account of the amazing success of the Soviet Government. That would require a book of 1143 pages, and it has been already written by my fellow Labians Sidney and Beatrice Webb (*Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?*) not only better than I could have written it but much better than any Russian could write it, for the Russians, solving problem after problem by trial and error, have not yet gathered their discoveries into any sort of synthesis and are still under the delusion that Marx is the latest authority on scientific Socialism, and infallible at that. In 1936 Moscow promulgated a new Constitution. Most of it might have been written by Tom Paine. It may be dismissed as a feat of window dressing to conciliate liberal opinion in Europe and America. As the only result of convincing the world that Communism is in the least like Liberalism would be to destroy all interest in it, the prudence of this resurrection of the Rights of Man is not obvious. Liberalism had its last chance in Russia in the N.T.P. which was a hopeless failure.

It remains only to note that in 1928 Trotsky differed from Stalin on the question of whether Russia should assume the leadership of all the proletarians of Europe and thus be in a condition of permanent revolutionary war with all the Capitalist States (Trotsky's view) or concentrate on her own business and establish an exemplary Socialism within her own territory. "Socialism in a single country" was the catchword, as Stalin adequately stated. Stalin's victory, involving the exile of Trotsky, was a triumph of common sense, and neo-Trotskyism now means a conspiracy of anti-Stalinists who do not believe that Socialism can maintain itself without foreign alliances and concessions to Capitalist allies east and west.

There is nothing new in Fascism except the circumstances in which it is now being tried. Julius Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon and his

nephew Louis Napoleon are the bygone Fascist leaders we talk most about, but they are only four out of innumerable able adventurers who have headed lawless revolts called *coups d'état* against governmental machinery that will not work fast enough to keep up with its job. A hundred years ago, when very little was expected from governments except police work, leaving industry, education, and public health to private enterprise and charity, there was no such impatience with the sloth of Parliamentary procedure and civil service inefficiency as there is now, when Governments are called on to interfere energetically in every department of national life. I have described in Chapter 12 how under William III the imposition of the Party System on Parliament made the House of Commons a mere club for the discussions and intrigues of the Ins and Outs, incapable of such measures as those by which, for instance, the Soviet Government has rescued Russia from unemployment, despairing poverty, and all the other horrors which the rest of the civilized world accepts as chronic and inevitable. Several attempts have been made to reform Parliament by extending the franchise among the male bourgeoisie in 1832, among the male manual workers in 1867, and again by further instalments until 1918, when the enfranchisement of women virtually established adult suffrage in Great Britain and thus reached the limit of possible democratic control of Parliament.

This consummation made an end of the millennial hopes which stayed off revolution all through the nineteenth century. Before 1832 all would be well when the great Reform Bill was passed. The ensuing disappointment produced the futile Chartist agitation for annual elections and manhood suffrage. The enfranchisement of a section of the manual workers in 1867 was followed by the outbreak of Socialism in 1880. But still the belief that votes for everybody and the capture of Parliament by a Labor Party would solve all social problems happily and constitutionally remained unquenchable, and was kindled to a flame in the agitation for votes for women before the war. I have never seen orators so inspired or meetings so wildly enthusiastic as at the suffragette demonstrations of that time. The belief in the magic of the vote was so fervent that I could not be forgiven for warning the suffragettes that votes for women would probably mean their self-exclusion from Parliament, and that what they needed was a constitutional law that all public authorities should have a representative proportion of women on them, votes or no votes. The next general election shattered the illusions of the enthusiasts, and delighted the Conservatives and

reactionists who had consented to the enfranchisement of women because they foresaw that it would reinforce their party. All the women candidates who had become famous by their work for women were contemptuously defeated; and the Socialist leader of the Labor Party was swept from his previously safe Parliamentary seat by the women's vote. Parliament after the election presented the extraordinary spectacle of an assembly of 614 men and one woman representing a community of nineteen millions of men and twentyone millions of women. Fortunately, on many of the questions which affect women specially the presence of even one woman makes a difference which only those who have witnessed it can appreciate.

At all events the bunch of carrots which for a whole century kept the electoral donkey pursuing it has now been overtaken and eaten without giving the poor beast the least refreshment. This is why Parliament has been pushed aside by Fascist Leaders in Germany and Italy, and reduced in Russia to a congress which meets at long intervals to ratify reforms, but has no effective hand in initiating them.

But something more positive has happened. One of the worst consequences of the British Parliamentary system and its foreign imitations is that it sets up before all our political agitators, as the first indispensable step to power and public service, a seat in the House of Commons or its Continental equivalent. Poor men spend their best years in this demoralizing and expensive pursuit whilst rich and highly connected young Conservative gentlemen with purely secondhand opinions or none at all can do it in six weeks in properly selected constituencies. When the proletarian candidates at last succeed they find themselves powerless to do anything but debate. When disuse has deprived them of the power to do anything else, and they have fallen into the routine of the House so completely that nobody has the slightest fear that they will do anything except talk, they may, if they have personality enough, become Prime Ministers; but pithed Prime Ministers are useful only as warnings to young revolutionary leaders that they too will be pithed if they do not turn their backs on a parliamentary career and create a militant Fascist force of personal devotees to overawe the parliamentary forces.

This does not seem easy or even possible. An adventurer attempting it may share the fate of Wat Tyler, of Jack Cade, of Essex, of Titus Oates, of Lord George Gordon, and other crazy favorites of the mob. But there have been extraordinary successes. Napoleon

and his nephew Louis Napoleon both died defeated and in prison or exile, but the uncle was an emperor for thirteen years and the nephew for eighteen, and this was better fun than being humdrum nobodies. It is too soon yet to ascertain the end of our famous contemporaries Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Kemal Ataturk, and Riza Shah. But every one of them has already been supreme head of the State for longer than Napoleon was emperor.

Just consider the situation. Imagine yourself, not an ambitious scoundrel, but an ardent and able reformer seeing civilization falling to pieces under an effete monarchy or a parliament capable of nothing but playing the Party game and talking. Who, in such circumstances, would not say 'Oh, if only I could have absolute power for ten years! or even five!'

Suppose also that this impatient genius has no illusions about Parliament, like Cromwell in his early days, or about the people, like Robert Emmet. Cromwell you may remember, induced Parliament to cut off the king's head, and thereby, in effect, abolished royal autocracy in England, Restoration or no Restoration. But when he went on to substitute for the king a Parliament so picked and pure and perfect that its rule was called the Reign of the Saints, it reduced itself to absurdity in no time, and forced him to turn it out neck and crown, and rule by what was practically martial law. Emmet thought that the Irish people would rise to his call and strike for independence. The Irish people did not rise, and Emmet was simply hanged, as Peto and Connolly were hanged one hundred and thirteen years later in the same cause. Our modern dictators are as free from the illusion of Emmet as from that of Cromwell. They begin by exploring every chamber of proletarian agitation and organization and underground conspiracy, including generally a spell or two in prison. From this they learn that the proletarian societies and their leaders are either narrowly practical, like the trade unions, or sects of idealists and cranks with no grasp of the realities of government and no fighting power, all quarrelling with one another like the early Christian theologians, and all in hopeless minorities, without the slightest chance of ever developing into anything bigger or better. What is a Buonaparte, a Mussolini, a Hitler, a Mustafa Kemal, a Riza Fahlavi to do when he has found out all this?

The answer is easy enough. He must just turn his back on all these little minorities of political partisans, Liberals and Republicans, Trade Unionists and Co-operators, Socialists, Bolsheviks, Anarchists, Syndicalists, Freethinkers, currency cranks, Salvationists,

etc. etc., and organize against them the huge majority which never dreams of conspiring against established order, and thinks those low societies ought to be put down by the police, that goes to church or chapel every Sunday in its best clothes, or else plays golf or lawn tennis in fashionable sporting clothes, that crowds to coronations, royal weddings, or the trooping of the color on the Horse Guards Parade, that stands in a queue five miles long to see a dead monarch lying in state, that thinks it has a creed and a code, but really does what every body does and is shocked by anyone who doesn't, that exercises its brains at crossword puzzles, whist drives, and bridge parties, and its bodies at golf and lawn tennis, fox trots and rumbas, and that to a prodigious extent does none of these things but just earns its living and housekeeps and nurses the children at home in a routine of dullness which has only quite lately begun to be enlivened by the wireless. You, the intelligent woman with political and social interests enough to induce you to read this book, know these people painfully well, and are suspected, disliked, or at best regarded as a little cracked by them except when, fortunately for you, they are so prostrated with reverence for anyone who reads serious books that they credit you with a mighty intellect and are proud to know you without knowing why.

They are patriotic, these people, by which they mean that God created them superior to the natives of other countries. To feed this conceit they thirst for glory (an invention of Napoleon's) meaning news of battles won by their brave sons or brothers. History is known to them, when it is known at all, as a string of battles in which their side has been victorious. But I need not go further into detail; you know the sort.

Now it is clear that if this multitude of ordinary folk can be politically organized it can vote the politically conscious little groups off the face of the earth, and mob them to death if necessary. All your would-be dictator has to do is to deal with fools according to their folly by giving them plenty of the stuff they like to swallow whilst he sets to work energetically on reforms that appeal to everyone's commonsense and comfort, and stops the more obvious abuses of the existing order. His first step will be to abolish all the little councils of elderly local tradesmen who have elected one another as petty parliaments to levy the rates and govern the country towns and rural districts. He will substitute energetic and capable young prefects with absolute powers from himself to clean up the provinces; and by this he will not only effect a speedy improvement in local government, but will do it in a way which exactly fits in with the

popular desire to get rid of a lot of vulgar old tradesmen and employ some superior person to set things right

The next step is to get rid of all the political and economic organizations formed by the people independently of the dictatorial power. This can be easily done by simple violence. Bodies of very young and athletic men, devoted to the dictator, and lumping the most innocent co-operative societies or the most respectable old trade unions with the reddest secret leagues of anarchists or communists as nests of wicked sedition and enemies of the Leader, will quite simply and naively break into the offices of these institutions, beat up the occupants, smash the furniture, empty the till, and use the lists of members to track down and beat up all the persons who have presumed to join such associations. The regular police, mostly sharing the views of the wreckers, will not interfere except to protect them from reprisals.

This being thoroughly done the Leader has next to restore order. The sacking of the offices and beating of a handful of officials and a citizen here and there cannot dispose of societies with funds at the bank, investments, mortgages, and a daily routine of business, including petty banking that must be disposed of or continued somehow. Here also the solution is easy. The Fascist ruler confiscates the property of the societies, and makes them departments of the new State under complete Government control. As to the purely political societies which have no funds and no function except propaganda (mostly seditious), they are wiped out by the onslaught, and all attempts to revive them made illegal.

Such proceedings scandalize the Liberals who raise a great ballyhoo against them as infringements of all the Liberal principles of liberty, democracy and all the rights of free speech, free thought, private property and private enterprise on which their Capitalism is founded. It is therefore important to bear in mind that nothing could be more democratic than the organization of the great mass of the people and the carrying out of their ideas of how public work should be done—that is, by superior persons exercising coercive authority to the complete exclusion of ‘the lower classes.’ When the Leader speaks of the Liberals and their bag of rights and liberty with masterful contempt, and calls for discipline, order, silence, patriotism, and devotion to the State of which he is the embodiment, the people respond enthusiastically and leave the Liberals to rot in the penal islands, concentration camps, and prisons into which they have been flung, or in the streets where they have been murdered. For not only have the average citizen’s ideas been

carried out; but the superficial practical results are immediately and strikingly successful. The young energetic prefects sweep away more petty abuses and initiate more urgently needed public work in six months than the superseded elderly tradesmen would have tackled in six years. Paris is replanned and rebuilt by Haussmann under Louis Napoleon; and trains run punctually in Italy for the first time on record under Mussolini. Meanwhile the Leader takes care that there shall be plenty of pageantry, of romantic oratory, of press propaganda, of Fascist teaching in the schools and universities, and as little criticism of his rule as possible. And so for a time, with a good Leader, Fascism flourishes, and is thoroughly popular and democratic. That is why there is always a practical tendency to Fascism over and above the fact that the average citizen is a Fascist by nature and schooling, and that the reformers and revolutionists are to him only a minority of seditious cranks. Besides, though nothing shocks our notions of liberty and order so much as the extinction of working class organizations by violence and plunder, their reconstruction as State departments produces what is called a United Front, and collects into a solid mass the fluctuating and often jarring fragments of organization into which the immense forces of the proletariat have quarrelsome split. It sets up a national control of the press and platform which is at least less liable to abuse than the control of the millionaires. For the democratic principle that public business is everybody's business, which breaks down in practice on the fact that everybody's business is nobody's business, and destroys all real responsibility for public work, it substitutes a Fascist dictator or prefect who can no more evade his responsibility for his job than any of Napoleon's marshals could. The pretence that selection by popular election makes a municipal councillor or a member of Parliament as responsible as an official who can be cashiered for the first mistake he makes or the first proofs that he is growing too old for his work, is folly on the face of it.

Fascism also gets rid of the absurdity of a senselessly obstructive Party Opposition, resulting in parliaments where half the members are trying to govern and the other half trying to prevent them. With such advantages, it is easy for a Napoleon to overthrow a parliament and be upheld as the savior of his country by enthusiastic plebiscites. The catch in it is that Fascist geniuses are not immortal, and, as happened to the Napoleons, may wear out before they die. If they leave Fascism in incapable or vicious hands, it may produce results which are at best deplorable and at worst diabolical. Peter

the Great, monster as he was, made changes in Russia, including the building of Petersburg, that no parliament or vestry could have conceived or executed within his lifetime; and Catherine II afterwards liberalized the thought and culture of her class very magnificently; but her successor, Tsar Paul, exercising the same autocratic power, lost his head and had to be murdered by his courtiers and bodyguard as a creature unfit to live. Nero, not having the strength of mind and political intelligence of Julius or Augustus, was driven mad by being deified. He also had to be slaughtered.

Hence a nation needs a constitution that will function harmlessly in the intervals between one able ruler and another. The history of hereditary absolute monarchs is one of States falling into confusion and corruption and being rescued from time to time by a capable monarch or a capable minister. None of our present Fascist Leaders can answer the question "Who is to succeed you?", or escape the continual suspicions of their sanity and the certainty of their approaching senility which make it impossible to guess what will happen next. That is why diplomats cling to parliamentary systems under which nothing can happen.

And then there is the romantic appetite for military glory and warrior virtue which Leaders must gratify or promise to gratify. When Catherine II found her subjects becoming troublesome she said, very wisely from her point of view, "I let us amuse them with a little war." Even now, when wars are so poisonous that the dread of them has produced a tidal wave of Pacifism, the Leaders keep up as much sabre rattling as the Hohenzollerns used to, and may, like the two Napoleons, have to play a war as their last card because their supporters are too ignorant to understand their civil reforms, and want, as the Zulus put it, to "wash their spears" and see their flag wave triumphant over the battlefield.

But all these weaknesses in Fascism are trifles compared to the vice in it which makes it useless for the checking of that ride to the abyss which has hitherto been the end of all Capitalist civilizations. The organization of popular ignorance and romantic folly may be trusted to upset incompetent governments, idolize a Leader, go mad with patriotic excitement at the spectacle of soldiers marching to war, shout itself hoarse at pageants and orations, and above all, rob, batter, imprison and slaughter the little scattered organizations of the poor as presumptuous, seditious, and dangerous. Now this is not the way to save civilization. It is the broad path to its destruction. A Fascist Leader may be quite sincerely desirous that history shall record of him that he put down the mighty from their seats



and exalted them of low degree a fundamental operation in the policy of economic equality which is an indispensable condition of prosperity and stability in any modern state. But the Fascists will have none of this. Of them it shall be said that they filled the overfed with good things and the poor they sent empty away. In their transports of virtuous indignation they will burn an Irish creamery, an Italian Friendly Society, a Co-operative Store, a Trade Union office, or any printing house of the Red press. But ask them to burn a country-house or sack the Bank of England, or lynch a Conservative Cabinet Minister, and they will conclude that you have gone mad or joined the Reds. The Fascist Leader, like our old friend the sorcerer's apprentice, finds that he can call up demons easily enough but knows no spell by which he can exorcise them when they have served his turn.

Thus when the Leader has played skittles with the poor with ridiculous ease, and having plundered them of their savings, finds that to carry out really big schemes of social reconstruction he must proceed to plunder the rich, he suddenly finds himself powerless. No doubt the gangsters and Sadists who rush to join any lawless and violent movement will plunder a castle or a bank, murder a prince or a banker, as readily as they would raid a slum or kill a police constable, but however useful these desperados may be in the first onslaught on the proletarian organizations, the Leader soon finds it urgently necessary to disband them and put as many of them as possible in their proper place, which is in prison. As to the honest young men who formed the main body of his troops, some of them may be brought under discipline as a regular police force but the bulk of them must be restored to normal pursuits and orderly life. And they would not support him in an attack on private property and private protection as institutions. A certain distance he can go in interfering with excessive selfishness or stupidity in their control of industry. He can force the poorer employers to modernize their machinery and "rationalize" their methods, because this will be profitable for themselves, and only the very poorest, who are therefore negligible, will be ruined by it. He can force them to amalgamate with big concerns because individual traders who are precariously exploiting capital, counted in thousands are powerless against combinations with capitals running into seven figures. He can tax their rents and profits by frightening them into supporting a large army and navy for their own protection against anti-Fascist foreigners. He can persuade them that a modicum of social reform is prudent and even commercially profitable. He can even

give them a place in the framework of the State, calling it, perhaps, the corporate State, and their combinations corporations but they will dislike this and not allow it to be carried beyond window dressing

If he goes further than this in the direction of Socialism he becomes a revolutionist, a Bolshevik. Now the modern Leader's trump card is that he has come to save society from Bolshevism *alias* Communism, which has come to mean any proletarian movement whatever, and though he can take advantage of this confusion by calling any particular public action Fascism when he desires it and Bolshevism when he objects to it, yet if he went too far in the Socialist direction the plutocracy would at once become critical. Suppose, for instance, the Leader, following the successful example of Louis Napoleon, sets to work to Haussmannize his metropolis. Everybody will applaud this as a visible magnificent improvement, as it in fact will be. But the result will be an enormous increase in the commercial value of the land on which the metropolis is built. The rents of the frontages on the Haussmannized thoroughfares will rise to undreamed-of figures. And they will go into the pockets of the proprietors of the land on which the metropolis is built, leaving the citizens as poor and hard-worked as before. A West End professional man said to me the other day "Until half past four in the afternoon I have to work for my landlord: what I earn after that it is for my wife and family." Our Government is building great material roads to oblige the car-driving and lorry-owning classes, and every one of these new roads converts the strips of land at the sides worth a few pounds an acre as agricultural land, into highly rented building sites. In the nineteenth century protests were made against the appropriation of "unearned increment" by the landed proprietors but today, when artificial roadmaking is going on at a comparatively stupendous rate, Capitalism has tamed us so abjectly that this easily preventable private appropriation is taken as a matter of course.

If Louis Napoleon, in addition to straightening the streets of Paris, had attempted to municipalize the rents and the building operations, he would have been ejected from France ten years before the battle of Sedan made an end of his French Empire. We have only to compare the development of Russia since the slump of 1929 with the utmost that Fascism has been able to accomplish in double that period to see that Fascism is subject to all the limitations and vices of Capitalism, and can no more save civilization today than it could save all the earlier civilizations it has wrecked. Even when it disciplines, rationalizes, economizes industry, the effect is to throw more

workers out of employment and, to avoid driving them to desperation, disable them by doles. When they have drained all the marshes and made all the roads to accommodate and enrich the landowners, and asked why Fascism cannot or will not organize them to feed themselves, the reply must be that land and capital, being private property, are not available for this purpose, and that nothing can be done for them except throw them just enough dole to keep them from running amok in the streets. For the organization of the proletarians to supply their own needs instead of making money for the proprietors is Communism and not Fascism.

There are some curious exceptions to the rule that Fascism, though it can plunder the poor as it pleases, cannot plunder the rich. Sometimes a separate section of the rich becomes so rich that if only sufficient prejudice can be raised against it on religious or political or even eugenic pretences, the temptation to plunder it may be too strong to be resisted by the others. Henry VIII, a royal Leader, plundered the Church and made it a crime to be a Catholic priest; but he immediately had to disgorge his booty and distribute it among his prefects and their families. In precisely the same way Führer Hitler has plundered the Jews and made it a crime to be a Jew in Germany. But he, too, has had to leave their jobs and their belongings to be owned and exploited by German employers who are sweating the German proletariat as rapaciously as any Jew. And he has felt the pulse of the German nation as to whether modern Materialism, Paganism, and Militarism have taken a sufficiently deep hold to make it safe to plunder the Lutheran and Catholic Churches, with, so far, negative conclusions. By making the Jews and their friends his enemies, shaking the sense of security which the Churches expect to enjoy under strongly centralized governments, and trying to organize a European crusade against Russia (the grave of Napoleon's greatness) the Führer has run a risk which may prove the undoing of German Fascism: certainly a much rasher risk than his tearing up the Versailles treaty and the Locarno pact when he knew, as every clearheaded diplomatist in Europe knew, that the Allies dare not re-open the war of 1914-18 in defence of these foolish, spiteful, or impracticable documents.

Fascism is always liable to be wrecked by idiosyncratic escapades. So far, the Italian Leader has kept his head. Though his entourage is strongly anti-clerical, and he himself always speaks in secular terms, he has made a Concordat with the Pope, and kept his rule free from all unorthodox complications. The Vatican, formerly the Pope's prison, is now the Capitol of a Roman city of God, a minia-

ture Papal State. Religions are not persecuted as such. The throne is tolerated; and there is a Great Council which looks like a Cabinet, a Senate and Chamber of Deputies which look like a parliament, with votes for men of 21 and upwards, and even for young men of 18 if they are married. There are provincial councils and local Communes with Mayors under a Joint Provincial Administration. Thus the people have samples of all the institutions they are accustomed to: a king, a Privy Council, a popular Leader, a Parliament, local authorities with their petty dignitaries, and adult male suffrage. They ask for nothing more. That the king is a cypher, and the parliament, carefully packed by the Great Council of Fascism (itself packed by the Leader), does not make any difference to them, as long as there is a building with an assembly in it, and it is called a Chamber of Deputies or a Senate, they are satisfied. If the Fascist revolution in Germany not only tolerated innovation, but even clamored for it, it was because the defeat of 1918 had reduced the country to a condition so abject that the *status quo* was intolerable, and the normal demand for Conservatism had become a demand for change at all costs.

It is interesting and very important to note that in some respects Communism and Fascism produce similar changes. Both make short work of Liberty and Democracy as Liberals understand them. To a Liberal liberty means absence of State interference. Democracy means that every person is born with unlimited political capacity, knowing what is best not only for herself but for the country, and competent to choose rulers and ministers for all offices of State from prime ministers to the chairmen of parish councils, the final authority on all public questions being the plebiscite or referendum, which is consequently the favorite resort of all the idolized Leaders. Louis Napoleon had two of them; and Herr Hitler has followed his example. The cry of Liberty is always on the lips of the propertied classes who own the lion's share of land and capital and have nothing to fear but nationalization of these resources, because it implies that the less government activity there is the more free the people are, and because it helps to elect the thoughtless who always support the *status quo* because anything unusual shocks them. Consequently Liberty and Democracy, thus understood, work very smoothly as long as the aim of the Cabinet is to keep the Government, except for ordinary police work, as inactive and inefficient as possible; but the moment this state of things is broken up either by an energetic Fascist Leader who is determined to clean up the Augean stable, or a Soviet which, having destroyed the Capitalist

system and made its operation criminal, has to take every sort of work in hand to feed and employ its people, the two definitions, one of them false and the other ridiculous, have to be scrapped.

Thus the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as the Communists call it, is very like any other dictatorship in respect of its contempt for all the negative traditions, rights, and liberties, which grew up in the days when it could be said that the law seldom came to the poor man's door save to oppress him, and when Dr Johnson could write into Goldsmith's Marxian poem, two centuries before Marx was born,

How small of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

Had he lived in the time when it was said that the factories of Lancashire used up nine generations of men in one generation, he might rather have written

How great, of all that human hearts endure,  
That part that Factory Acts alone can cure!

Those who cry Liberty when there is no liberty are as unbearable as those who cry Peace where there is no peace. The real breach between Fascism and Communism opens, not on methods of production and industrial discipline, as to which Communism has a good deal to learn technically from Capitalism, but on the fundamental question of distribution, on which Capitalism has broken down grotesquely. For this there is no remedy in Fascism except Communism; and Communism is precisely what Fascism organizes and educates public feeling to hold in abhorrence. All that can be said for Fascism is that it trains citizens to take the corporate view of themselves, looking to the State—the Totalitarian State, as it is tautologically called—instead of to their private individual competitive efforts to make their lives tolerable. It also rashly trains them to handle machine-guns at sixteen, enabling them to act at a pinch as their own Praetorian Guard.

So far, Fascism is better than Liberalism (which, by the way, is a post-Communist and not a pre-Communist doctrine: therefore it has a great future before it when the world is full of Communists who will be at leisure for the greater part of their lives) in so far as it produces a United Front with a public outlook; but as long as it maintains private property it must, as we have seen, end in a social morass of general poverty and exceptional riches, slavery, and parasitism, with the ever present threat of proletarian revolution held

off by grudging doles that seem much less attractive than the Bread and Circuses of the ancient Roman Fascism which perished and dragged down the European civilization of that time with it, precisely as modern Fascism will if it remains only the latest mask of Capitalism

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## PERORATION

AND now a last word as to your own spiritual centre. All through this book we have been thinking of the public and of our two selves as members of the public. This is our duty as citizens, but it may drive us mad if we begin to think of public evils as millionfold evils. They are nothing of the kind. What you yourself can suffer is the utmost that can be suffered on earth. If you starve to death you experience all the starvation that ever has been or ever can be. If ten thousand other women starve to death with you, their suffering is not increased by a single pang: their share in your fate does not make you ten thousand times as hungry, nor prolong your suffering ten thousand times. Therefore do not be oppressed by "the frightful sum of human suffering": there is no sum. Two lean women are not twice as lean as one nor two fat women twice as fat as one. Poverty and pain are not cumulative: you must not let your spirit be crushed by the fancy that it is. If you can stand the suffering of one person you can fortify yourself with the reflection that the suffering of a million is no worse: nobody has more than one stomach to fill nor one frame to be stretched on the rack. Do not let your mind be disabled by excessive sympathy. What the true Socialist revolts against is not the suffering that is not cumulative, but the waste that is. A thousand healthy happy honorable women are not each a thousand times as healthy, happy, or honorable as one, but they can co-operate to increase the health, happiness, and honor possible for each of them. At present nobody can be healthy, happy, or honorable: our standards are so low that when we call ourselves so we mean only that we are not sick nor crying nor lying nor stealing (legally or illegally) oftener than we must agree to put up with under our Capitalist Constitution.

We have to confess it. Capitalist mankind in the lump is detestable. Class hatred is not a mere matter of envy on the part of the poor and contempt and dread on the part of the rich. Both rich and poor are really hateful in themselves. For my part I hate the poor and look forward eagerly to their extermination. I pity the rich a little, but am equally bent on their extermination. The working classes, the business classes, the professional classes, the pro-

perturbed classes, the ruling classes, are each more odious than the other—they have no right to live—I should despair if I did not know that they will all die presently, and that there is no need on earth why they should be replaced by people like themselves. I do not want any human child to be brought up as I was brought up, nor as any child I have known was brought up. Do you?

And yet I am not in the least a misanthrope. I am a person of normal affection—as you probably are, but for that very reason I hate to be surrounded, not by people whose interests are the same as my own, whom I cannot injure without injuring myself, and who cannot injure me without injuring themselves, but by people whose interest it is to get as much out of me as they possibly can, and give me as little for it as possible (if anything). If I were poor, my relatives, now that I am old, would have to support me to keep me out of the work-house—which means that they would have a strong interest in my death. As I am rich enough to leave some property, my children, if I had any, would be looking forward impatiently to my funeral and the reading of my will. The whole property class is waiting for dead men's shoes. All the time. If I become ill and send for a doctor I know that if he does not prolong my illness to the utmost—and send me to expensive nursing homes to submit to still more expensive operations, he will be taking bread out of his children's mouths. My lawyer is bound by all his affections to encourage me in litigation, and to make it as protracted and costly as he can. Even my clergyman, partly State supported as he is, dare not if I belong to the Church of England rebuke me for oppressing the poor any more than he dare chime on me against the oppression of the rich if I were poor. The teacher in the school where my neighbors' children have their morals formed would find herself in the gutter if she taught any child that to live on what is called an independent income without working is to live the life of a thief without the risks and enterprise that make the pirate and burglar seem heroic to boys. My tradesmen's business is to overcharge me as much as they can without running too great a risk of being under-bid by their rivals. My landlord's business is to screw out of me the uttermost extractable farthing of my earnings for his permission to occupy a place on earth. Were I unmarried I should be pursued by hordes of women so desperately in need of a husband's income and position, that their utmost efforts to marry me would be no evidence of their having the smallest personal regard for me. I cannot afford the friendship of people much richer than myself. Those much poorer cannot afford mine. Between those who do the

daily work of my house, and are therefore necessary partners in my work, and me there is a gulf of class which is nothing but a gulf of unequal distribution of wealth. Life is made lonely and difficult for me in a hundred unnecessary ways; and so few people are clever and tactful and sensible and self-controlled enough to pick their way through the world without giving or taking offence that the first quality of capitalistic mankind is quarrelsomeness. Our streets are fuller of feuds than the Highlands or the Arabian desert. The social friction set up by inequality of income is intense: society is like a machine designed to work smoothly with the oil of equality, into the bearings of which some malignant demon keeps pouring the sand of inequality. If it were not for the big pools of equality that exist at different levels, the machine would not work at all. As it is, the seizures-up, the smashings, the stoppages, the explosions, never cease. They vary in magnitude from a railway worker crushed in the shunting-yard to a world war in which millions of men with the strongest natural reasons for saving each others' lives destroy them instead in the cruellest manner, and from a squabble over a penny in a one-room tenement to a lawsuit lasting twenty years and reducing all the parties to it to destitution. And to outface this miserable condition we bleat once a year about peace on earth and good-will to men: that is, among persons to whom we have distributed incomes ranging from a starvation dole to several thousands a day, piously exhorting the recipients to love one-another. Have you any patience with it? I have none.

Now you may, for all I know, be a sharp, cynical sort of person; or you may be a nice, mushy, amiable, goodnatured one. If the latter you will tell me that people are not governed so much by money considerations as I make out: that your doctor hates to see you ill and does his best to cure you; that your solicitor keeps you out of litigation when you lose your temper and want to rush into it; that your clergyman calls himself a Christian Socialist and leads all the popular agitations against the oppression of the poor by the rich; that your children were heartbroken when their father died, and that you never had a cross word with him about his property or yours; that your servants have been with you for forty years and have brought you up from your childhood more devotedly and affectionately than your own parents, and have remained part of the family when your children flew away from the nest to new nests of their own; that your tradesmen have never cheated you, and have helped you over hard times by giving you long and forbearing credit: in short, that in spite of all I may say, this Capitalist world



is full of kindness and love and goodfellowship and genuine religion. Dr Johnson, who described his life as one of wretchedness; Anatole France, who said he had never known a moment's happiness, Dean Swift, who saw in himself and his fellowmen Yahoos far inferior to horses; and Shakespeare, to whom a man in authority was an angry ape, are known to have been admired, loved, petted, entertained, even idolized, throughout lives of honorable and congenial activity such as fall to the lot of hardly one man in a billion; yet the obscure billions manage to get on without unbearable discontent. William Morris, whose abhorrence of Capitalism was far deeper than that of persons of only ordinary mental capacity and sensibility, said, when he was told that he was mortally ill, "Well, I cannot complain: I have had a good time".

To all this consolation I have been able in this book to add that Capitalism, though it richly deserves the very worst that Karl Marx or even John Ruskin said of it and a good deal more that they never thought of, was yet, in its origin, thoroughly well intentioned. It was indeed much better intentioned than early Christianity, which treated this world as a place of punishment for original sin, of which the end was fortunately at hand. Turgot and Adam Smith were beyond all comparison more sincere guides to earthly prosperity than St Paul. If they could have foreseen the history of the practical application of their principles in the nineteenth century in England they would have recoiled in horror, just as Karl Marx would have recoiled if he had been foreshewn what happened in Russia from 1917 to 1921 through the action of able and devoted men who made his writings their Bible. Good people are the very devil sometimes, because, when their good-will hits on a wrong way, they go much further along it and are much more ruthless than bad people; but there is always hope in the fact that they mean well, and that their bad deeds are their mistakes and not their successes; whereas the evils done by bad people are not mistakes but triumphs of wickedness. And since all moral triumphs, like mechanical triumphs, are reached by trial and error, we can despair of Democracy and despair of Capitalism without despairing of human nature: indeed if we did not despair of them as we know them we should prove ourselves so worthless that there would be nothing left for the world but to wait for the creation of a new race of beings capable of succeeding where we have failed.

Nevertheless I must warn my amiable optimist and meliorist readers not only that all the virtues that comfort them are operating in spite of Capitalism and not as part of it, but that they are baffled

by it in ways that are hidden from people who have not examined the situation with a good deal of technical knowledge and some subtlety. Take your honest and kindly doctor, and your guardian angel solicitor. I quite admit that there are plenty of them: the doctor who is a mercenary scoundrel and the lawyer who is a mischievous and heartless rascal is as exceptional as any other sort of criminal. I myself have never chanced to come across one, and most likely you have not either. But I have come across honest doctors whose treatment has been fatal, and honest lawyers whose advice has been disastrous. So have you, perhaps.

You know the very true saying that where there is a will there is a way. Unfortunately the good will does not necessarily find the right way. There are always dozens of ways, bad, good, and indifferent. You must know some bad women who are doing the right thing from bad motives side by side with good women who are doing the wrong thing from the best motives in the world. For instance, the number of children, especially first children, who are guarded and swaddled and drugged and doctored to death by the solicitude of their ignorantly affectionate mothers must be greater than that of the children who die of maternal dislike and neglect. When silly people (writers, I regret to say, some of them) tell you that a loving heart is enough, remind them that fools are more dangerous than rogues, and that women with loving hearts are often pitiable fools. The finding of the right way is not sentimental work: it is scientific work, requiring observation, reasoning, and intellectual conscientiousness.

It is on this point of intellectual conscientiousness that we all break down under pecuniary temptation. We cannot help it, because we are so constituted that we always believe finally what we wish to believe. The moment we want to believe something, we suddenly see all the arguments for it, and become blind to the arguments against it. The moment we want to disbelieve anything we have previously believed, we suddenly discover not only that there is a mass of evidence against it, but that this evidence was staring us in the face all the time. If you read the account of the creation of the world in the book of Genesis with the eye of faith you will not perceive a single contradiction in it. If you read it with the eye of hostile critical science you will see that it consists of two successive accounts, so different that they cannot both be true. In modern books you will be equally baffled by your bias. If you love animals and have a horror of injustice and cruelty, you will read the books of wonderful discoveries and cures made by vivisection

with a sickened detestation of their callous cruelty, and with amazement that anyone could be taken in by such bad reasoning about lies which have been reduced to absurdity by force of flat fact every few years, only to be replaced by a fresh crop. If, however, you have only a dread of disease for yourself or your family, and feel that in comparison to relief from this terror the sufferings of a few dogs and guinea-pigs are not worth bothering about, you will find in the same books such authentic and convincing miracles, such marvellous cures for all diseases, such gospels of hope, monuments of learning, and infallible revelations of the deepest truths of Science, that your indignation at the derisive scepticism of the humanitarians may develop into an enmity (heartily reciprocated) that may end in persecutions and wars of science like the persecutions and wars of religion that followed the Reformation, and were not new then.

But, you will ask, what have Socialism and Capitalism to do with the fact that belief is mostly bias? It is very simple. If by inequality of income you give your doctors, your lawyers, your clergymen, your landlords, or your rulers an overwhelming economic interest in any sort of belief or practice, they will immediately begin to see all the evidence in favor of that sort of belief and practice, and become blind to all the evidence against it. Every doctrine that will enrich doctors, lawyers, landlords, clergymen, and rulers will be embraced by them eagerly and hopefully; and every doctrine that threatens to impoverish them will be mercilessly criticized and rejected. There will inevitably spring up a body of biassed teaching and practice in medicine, law, religion, and government that will become established and standardized as scientifically, legally, religiously, constitutionally, and morally sound, taught as such to all young persons entering these professions, stamping those who dare dissent as outcast quacks, heretics, sedition mongers, and traitors. Your doctor may be the honestest, kindest doctor on earth; your solicitor may be a second father or mother to you; your clergyman may be a saint; your member of Parliament another Moses or Solon. They may be heroically willing to put your health, your prosperity, your salvation, and your protection from injustice before their interest in getting a few extra pounds out of you; but how far will that help you if the theory and practice of their profession, imposed on them as a condition of being allowed to pursue it, has been corrupted at the root by pecuniary interest? They can proceed only as the hospitals and medical schools teach them and order them to proceed, as the courts pro-

ceed, as the Church proceeds, as Parliament proceeds: that is their orthodoxy; and if the desire to make money and obtain privileges has been operating all the time in building up that orthodoxy, their best intentions and endeavors may result in leaving you with your health ruined, your pocket empty, your soul damned, and your liberties abrogated by your best friends in the name of science, law, religion, and the British constitution. Ostensibly you are served and protected by learned professions and political authorities whose duty it is to save life, minimize suffering, keep the public health as tested by vital statistics at the highest attainable pitch, instruct you as to your legal obligations and see that your legal rights are not infringed, give you spiritual help and disinterested guidance when your conscience is troubled, and make and administer, without regard to persons or classes, the laws that protect you and regulate your life. But the moment you have direct personal occasion for these services you discover that they are all controlled by Trade Unions in disguise, and that the high personal honor and kindness of their individual members is subject to the morality of Trade Unionism, so that their loyalty to their union, which is essentially a defensive conspiracy against the public, comes first, and their loyalty to you as patient, client, employer, parishioner, customer or citizen, next. The only way in which you can set their natural virtues free from this omnipresent trade union and governing class corruption and tyranny is to secure for them all equal incomes which none of them can increase without increasing the income of everybody else to exactly the same amount; so that the more efficiently and economically they do their work the lighter their labor will be and the higher their credit.

Under such conditions you would find human nature good enough for all your reasonable purposes; and when you took up such books as *Gulliver's Travels* or *Candide*, which under Capitalism are unanswerable indictments of mankind as the wickedest of all known species, you would see in them only terribly vivid clinical lectures on extinct moral diseases which were formerly produced by inequality as smallpox and typhus were produced by dirt. Such books are never written until mankind is horribly corrupted, not by original sin but by inequality of income.

Then the coveted distinction of lady and gentleman, instead of being the detestable parasitic pretension it is at present, meaning persons who never condescend to do anything for themselves that they can possibly put on others without rendering them equivalent service, and who actually make their religion centre on the infamy

of loading the guilt and punishment of all their sins on an innocent victim (what real lady would do so base a thing?), will at last take on a simple and noble meaning, and be brought within the reach of every able-bodied person. For then the base woman will be she who takes from her country more than she gives to it, the common person will be she who does no more than replace what she takes, and the lady will be she who, generously overearning her income, leaves the nation in her debt and the world a better world than she found it.

By such ladies and their sons can the human race be saved, and not otherwise.

AYOJ ST LAWRENCE,  
16th March 1927

## APPENDIX

### INSTEAD OF A BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS book is so long that I can hardly think that any woman will want to read much more about Socialism and Capitalism for some time. Besides, a bibliography is supposed to be an acknowledgment by the author of the books from which his own book was compiled. Now this book is not a compilation: it is all out of my own head. It was started by a lady asking me to write her a letter explaining Socialism. I thought of referring her to the hundreds of books which have been written on the subject, but the difficulty was that they were nearly all written in an academic jargon which, though easy and agreeable to students of economics, politics, philosophy, and sociology generally, is unbearably dry, meaning unreadable, to women not so specialized. And then, all these books are addressed to men. You might read a score of them without ever discovering that such a creature as a woman had ever existed. In fairness let me add that you might read a good many of them without discovering that such a thing as a man ever existed. So I had to do it all over again in my own way and yours. And though there were piles of books about Socialism, and an enormous book about Capitalism by Karl Marx, not one of them answered the simple question "What is Socialism?" The other simple question, "What is Capital?" was smothered in a mass of hopelessly wrong answers, the right one having been hit on (as far as my reading goes) only once, and that was by the British economist Stanley Jevons when he remarked casually that capital is spare money. I made a note of that.

However, as I know that women who frequent University Extension lectures will not be satisfied until they have choked their brains by reading a multitude of books on the subject, and as the history of Socialist thought is instructive, I will say just a word or two in the customary pedantic manner about the literary milestones on the road from Capitalism to Socialism.

The theory of Capitalism was not finally worked out until early in the nineteenth century by Ricardo, a Jewish stockbroker. As he had a curious trick of saying the opposite of what he meant whilst contriving somehow to make his meaning clear, his demonstration was elegantly and accurately paraphrased by a first rate literary artist and opium eater, Thomas De Quincey, who could write readably and fascinatingly about anything.

The theory was that if private property in land and capital, and sanctity of free contract between individuals, were enforced as fundamental constitutional principles, the proprietors would provide employment for the rest of the community on terms sufficient to furnish them with at least a bare subsistence in return for continuous industry, whilst themselves becoming rich to such excess that the investment of their superfluous income as capital would cost them no privation. No attempt was made

to disguise the fact that the resultant disparity between the poverty of the proletarian masses and the riches of the proprietors would produce popular discontent, or that as wages fell and rents rose with the increase of population, the contrast between laborious poverty and idle luxury would provide sensational topics for Radical agitators. Austin's Lectures on Jurisprudence and Macaulay's forecasts of the future of America prove that the more clearheaded converts to the theory of Capitalism had no millennial illusions.

But they could see no practicable alternative. The Socialist alternative of State organization of industry was inconceivable, because, as industry had not yet finished the long struggle by which it extricated itself from the obsolete restrictions and oppressions of medieval and feudal society, State interference, outside simple police work, still seemed a tyranny to be broken, not a vital activity to be extended. Thus the new Capitalist economic policy was put forward in opposition, not to Socialism, but to Feudalism or Paternal Oligarchy. It was dogmatically called Political Economy absolute, complete, and inevitable; and the workers were told that they could no more escape or modify its operation than change the orbits of the planets.

In 1840 a French proletarian, Proudhon, published an essay with the startling title "What is Property? Theft". In it he demonstrated that a *rentier*, or person living, as we now put it, by owning instead of by working, inflicts on society precisely the same injury as a thief. Proudhon was a poor Frenchman; but a generation later John Ruskin, a rich Englishman of the most conservative education and culture, declared that whoever was not a worker was either a beggar or a robber, and published accounts of his personal activities and expenditure to prove that he had given good value for his rents and dividends. A generation later again Cecil Rhodes, an ultra-imperialist, made a famous will bequeathing his large fortune for public purposes, and attaching the condition that no idler should ever benefit by it. It may be said that from the moment when Capitalism established itself as a reasoned-out system to be taught at the universities as standard political economy, it began to lose its moral plausibility, and, in spite of its dazzling mechanical triumphs and financial miracles, steadily progressed from inspiring the sanguine optimism of Macaulay and his contemporaries to provoking a sentiment which became more and more like abhorrence among the more thoughtful even of the capitalists themselves.

All such moral revolutions have their literary prophets and theorists; and among them the first place was taken by Karl Marx, in the second half of the nineteenth century, with his history of Capital, an overwhelming exposure of the horrors of the industrial revolution and the condition to which it had reduced the proletariat. Marx's contribution to the abstract economic theory of value, by which he set much store, was a blunder which was presently corrected and superseded by the theory of

Jevons, but as Marx's category of "surplus value" (*Mehrwerth*), meaning rent, interest and profits, represented solid facts, his blunder in no way invalidated his indictment of the capitalist system, nor his historical generalization as to the evolution of society on economic lines. His so-called Historic Materialism is easily vulnerable to criticism as a law of nature, but his postulate that human society does in fact evolve on its belly, as an army marches, and that its belly bris its brains is a safe working one. But like much less read *History of Civilization*, also a work of the mind enfeebling sort, is the same thesis but a different moral: to wit, that progress depends on the critical people who do not believe everything they are told: that is, on scepticism.

Even before Karl Marx the Capitalist economists had lost their confidence, and its ordinary exponents become disingenuously evasive. Not so the big game men. John Stuart Mill began as a Ricardian and ended as an avowed Socialist. Cairnes still saw no practicable alternative to Capitalism, but his contempt for the "drones in the hive" who live by owning was as thorough and outspoken as Ruskin's. Their latest accidental success, Mr Maynard Keynes, at misses F. A. Hayek's fairer contemptuously as an exploded fallacy.

After Cairnes a school of British Socialist economists arose, notably Sidney and Beatrice Webb of the Fabian Society, who substituted the term Political Science for Political Economy. They give historical consciousness to the proletarian movement by writing its history with the intimate knowledge and biographical vivacity needed to give substance to the abstract proletarian described by Marx. The evolution of Trade Unionism, Co-operation, and proletarian politics (Industrial Democracy) was reasoned out and documented by them. Their histories of English local government and of the Poor Law cover a huge part of the general field of British constitutional and administrative activity past and present. They cured Fabianism of the romantic amateurishness which had made the older Socialist agitations negligible and ridiculous, and contributed most of the Fabian Society's practical proposals for the solution of pressing problems. They shattered the old Capitalist theory of the impotence of the State for anything but mischief in industry, and demonstrated not only that communal and collective enterprise has already attained a development undreamt of by Ricardo and his contemporaries, but that Capitalism itself is dependent for its existence on State guidance, and has evolved collective forms of its own which have taken it far beyond the control of the individual private investor, and left it ripe for transfer to national or municipal ownership. Their volume on the decay of Capitalism has completed Marx's work of driving Capitalism from its old pretension to be normal, inevitable, and in the long run always beneficial in modern society, to a position comparable to that of an army digging itself into its last ditch after a long series of surrenders and retreats. They estimate roughly that in its hundred years of sup-



remacy capitalism justified its existence, *faute de mieux*, for the first fifty years, and for the last fifty has been collapsing more and more on its crazy foundation

Beatrice Webb's curious mixture of spiritual and technical autobiography, entitled *My Apprenticeship*, describes how an intelligent girl-capitalist, with a sensitive social conscience and a will of her own, critically impervious to mere persuasion, and impressible by first hand evidence and personal experience only, was led to Socialism by stubbornly investigating the facts of Capitalist civilization for herself. The Intelligent Woman with a turn for investigation or an interest in character study, or both, should read it.

Between Karl Marx and the Webbs came Henry George with his *Progress and Poverty*, which converted many to Land Nationalization. It was the work of a man who had seen that the conversion of an American village to a city of millionaires was also the conversion of a place where people could live and let live in tolerable comfort to an inferno of seething poverty and misery. Tolstoy was one of his notable converts. George's omission to consider what the State should do with the nation it rent after it had taken it into the public treasury stopped him on the threshold of Socialism, but most of the young men whom he had led up to it went through (like myself) into the Fabian Society and other Socialist bodies. *Progress and Poverty* is still Ricardian in theory, indeed it is on its abstract side a repetition of De Quincey's *Logic of Political Economy*, but whereas De Quincey, as a true-blue British Tory of a century ago, accepted the Capitalist unequal distribution of income, and the consequent division of society into rich gentry and poor proletarians, as a most natural and desirable arrangement, George, as an equally true-blue American republican, was revolted by it.

After *Progress and Poverty* the next milestone is *Fabian Essays*, edited by myself, in which Sidney Webb first entered the field as a definitely Socialist writer with Graham Wallas, whose later treatises on constitutional problems are important, and Sydney Olivier (Lord Olivier) whose studies of the phenomenon of the "poor white" in Africa and America, facing the competition of the black proletarians created by negro slavery, should be read by Colonial Ministers. In *Fabian Essays* Socialism is presented for the first time as a completely constitutional political movement, which the most respectable and least revolutionary citizen can join as irreproachably as he might join the nearest Conservative club. Marx is not mentioned, and his peculiar theory of value is entirely ignored, the economic theories relied on being Jevons's theory of value and Ricardo's theory of the rent of land, the latter being developed so as to apply to industrial capital and interest as well. In short, Socialism appears in *Fabian Essays* purged of all its unorthodox views and insurrectionary Liberal associations. This is what distinguished the volume at that time from such works as the *England For All* of Henry Mayers Hyndman,

the founder of the Social-Democratic Federation who, until 1918, when the Russian Marxists outraged his British patriotism by the treaty of Brest Litovsk, clung to Marx's value theory, and to the Marxian traditions of the barricade Liberalism of 1848, with a strong dash of the freethinking gentlemanly cosmopolitanism of the advanced republican *litterateurs* of the middle of the nineteenth century.

After Fabian Essays treatises on Socialism followed first singly, then in dozens, then in scores and now in such profusion that I never read them unless I knew the writers personally, nor always, I confess, even then.

If you read Sociology, not for information but for entertainment (small blame to you!), you will find that the nineteenth-century poets and prophets who denounced the wickedness of our Capitalism exactly as the Hebrew prophets denounced the Capitalism of their time are much more exciting to read than the economists and writers on political science who worked out the economic theory and political requirements of Socialism. Carlyle's Past and Present and Shooting Niagara, Ruskin's Ethics of the Duty and Folly of Navigation, William Morris's News from Nowhere (the best of all the Utopias), Dickens's Hard Times and Little Dorrit, are notable examples. Ruskin in particular leaving all the professed Socialists, even Karl Marx, miles behind in force of invective. Lenin's criticisms of modern society seem like the platitudes of a first-licee in comparison. Lenin wisely reserved his most blighting invectives for his own mistakes.

But I doubt whether nineteenth-century writers can be as entertaining to you as they are to me who spent the first forty-four years of my life in that beguiled period. If you would appreciate the enormous change from nineteenth-century self-satisfaction to twentieth-century self-criticism you can read *The Pickwick Papers* (jolly naïve Dickens) and then read *Our Mutual Friend* (disillusioned mature Dickens), after which you can try Dickens's successor H. G. Wells who, never having had any illusions about the nineteenth century, is utterly impatient of its blunderings, and full of the possibilities of social reconstruction. When you have studied nineteenth-century county gentility in the novels of Anthony Trollope and Thackeray for the sake of understanding your more behindhand friends, you must study it up-to-date in the novels of John Galsworthy. To realise how ignorant even so great an observer as Dickens could be of English life outside London and the main coaching routes you can compare his attempt to describe the Potteries in *Hard Times* with Arnold Bennett's native pictures of the Five Towns but to appreciate his much more serious and complete ignorance of working-class history and organization in his own day you would have to turn from fiction to the Webbs' *History of Trade Unionism*.

The earlier nineteenth-century literature, for all its invective, satire, derision and caricature, made amiable by its generous indignation, was not a literature of revolt. It was pre-Marxian. Post-Marxian literature, even in its most goodhumored pages by men who never read Marx, is

revolutionary: it does not contemplate the survival of the present order, which Thackeray, for instance, in his bitterest moods seems never to have doubted.

For women the division is made by Marx's Norwegian contemporary Ibsen rather than by Marx. Ibsen's women are all in revolt against Capitalist morality; and the clever ladies who have since filled our bookshelves with more or less autobiographical descriptions of female frustration and slavery are all post-Ibsen. The modern literature of male frustration, much less copious, is post-Strindberg. In neither branch are there any happy endings. They have the Capitalist horror without the Socialist hope.

The post-Marxian, post-Ibsen psychology gave way in 1914-18 to the post-war psychology. It is very curious; but it is too young, and I too old, for more than this bare mention of its existence and its literature.

Finally I may mention some writings of my own, mostly in the form of prefaces to my published plays. One of the oddities of English literary tradition is that plays should be printed with prefaces which have nothing to do with them, and are really essays, or manifestoes, or pamphlets, with the plays as a bait to catch readers. I have exploited this tradition very freely, puzzling many good people who thought the prefaces must be part of the plays. In this guise I contended that poverty should be neither pitied as an inevitable misfortune, nor tolerated as a just retribution for misconduct, but resolutely stamped out and prevented from recurring as a disease fatal to human society. I also made it quite clear that Socialism means equality of income or nothing, and that under Socialism you would not be allowed to be poor. You would be forcibly fed, clothed, lodged, taught, and employed whether you liked it or not. If it were discovered that you had not character and industry enough to be worth all this trouble, you might possibly be executed in a kindly manner; but whilst you were permitted to live you would have to live well. Also you would not be allowed to have half a crown an hour when other women had only two shillings, or to be content with two shillings when they had half a crown. As far as I know I was the first Socialist writer to whom it occurred to state this explicitly as a necessary postulate of permanent civilization: but as nothing that is true is ever new I daresay it had been said again and again before I was born.

Two Fabian booklets of mine entitled *Socialism and Superior Brains* and *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading* are still probably worth reading, as they are written from personal experience of both.

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